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A Public Theology for Peace Photography:  
A Critical Analysis of the Roles of Photojournalism in  
Peacebuilding, with the Special Reference to the Gwangju  
Uprising in South Korea

Sangduk Kim



I, Sangduk Kim, attests that this thesis has been composed by me, and that the work is my own, and that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Sangduk Kim



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## ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I investigate the different ways in which photography can be used to build peace in conflict situations. Although its role can be ambivalent, I primarily focus on its positive uses with the question: *to what extent can photography promote peace rather than violence and conflict?* My contention is that photography has the potential to contribute to building peace through several important roles in pre-conflict, post-conflict, and conflict situations: it can bear witness to truth, represent victims' suffering, encourage nonviolent resistance against violence, reconstruct painful memories, and re-imagine justice and reconciliation. To do this, I primarily focus on the May 18<sup>th</sup> Gwangju Democratic Uprising which happened between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of May 1980 in the city of Gwangju, in the south-western region of South Korea.

In the first chapter, I explore the relation between photography and peacebuilding, providing a brief history of “war photography” particularly between the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. I focus on two movements in war photography—*realism* and *surrealism*. Then, I consider the role of war photography from a peacebuilding perspective, by focusing on the concept of “social psychological distance” between photographs and audience.

In the second chapter, I consider how a photograph can reveal truth in violent conflict situations, focusing on the concept of “bearing witness”. In comparison with the concept of “eye witnessing”, I examine how photographs have contributed to bearing witness to violent events. In this fashion, I focus on the importance of journalists and their roles as bearing witness to truth.

In the third chapter, I investigate how photography can represent a victim's suffering and promote empathy. For this, I re-examine compassion fatigue theory, drawing upon the work of Susan Sontag and Susan Moeller. I then explore the theme through analysis of social documentary photography in the mid-twentieth century in the United States.

In the fourth chapter, I argue that photography has the potential play an active role in empowering people to overcome fear and resist violence nonviolently. This offers a balance to those who propose a compassion fatigue theory, arguing that repeated exposure to violent images can reduce moral sensibility. In other words, even



though photography can produce cultural fatigue from overwhelming violent representations, it can also promote moral sensibility and social actions against violence.

In the fifth chapter, I investigate the role of photography in the aftermath of violent conflict, mainly focusing on the relationship between remembering and painful history. Drawing on cultural memory theories such as those developed by Maurice Halbwachs and Aleida and Jan Assmann, I contend that social identities can be reconstructed through the process of remembering. I argue that photography can be a tool for remembering the painful history wisely, mainly focusing on reconstruction of identity and healing of cultural trauma (Hicks 2002; Volf 2006). I explore how photography contributes to the practice of remembering painful history rightly.

In the final chapter, I focus on reconciliation and restorative justice as an alternative approach to building a just *and* peaceful society in the aftermath of a conflict such as the Gwangju Uprising. Because of the relational aspect of reconciliation and restorative justice, I argue, the approach can contribute to the development of the ‘moral imagination’ that overcomes the limits of the current juridical justice system. Reconciliation cannot be only the end of peacebuilding, but also a practical guideline for achieving both peace and justice.

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## INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, I will investigate the different ways in which photography can be used to build peace in a conflict situation. Although its role can be ambivalent, I will primarily focus on its positive and constructive uses with the question: *to what extent can photography promote peace rather than violence and conflict?* My contention is that photography can potentially contribute to building peace through several important roles in pre-conflict, post-conflict, and conflict situations: it can bear witness to truth, represent victims' suffering, encourage nonviolent resistance against violence, reconstruct painful memories, and re-imagine justice and reconciliation. To do this, I primarily focus on the May 18<sup>th</sup> Gwangju Democratic Uprising which happened between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of May 1980 in the city of Gwangju, in the south-western region of South Korea.

This thesis engages with several related questions: How does photography relate to peace? What is the relationship between photography and peace(building)? What is the role of photography in building peace? These questions lead to others such as: To what extent does photography promote peace and incite conflict? What can be learnt by investigating two different subjects, photography and peacebuilding? Lastly, how can developing an understanding of the relationship between peacebuilding and photography contribute to the role of the church in peacebuilding. Through answering these questions, I will outline both the relevance and rationale of this thesis.

In this introduction, I will firstly survey relevant aspects of the peacebuilding literature, reflecting on pertinent concepts and approaches, in order to develop a theoretical framework for the thesis. This will be rooted in a critical perspective to peacebuilding and conflict transformation. This framework is useful in understanding conflict at a cultural level since I am interested more broadly in the dynamics between arts and peacebuilding. I will review two models in dealing with arts and peacebuilding, a strategic and a critical approach. While a strategic approach focuses on how to use arts effectively for peacebuilding, a critical approach focuses rather on the nature of arts and its social function in a historical context. Grounded in this critical perspective on arts and peacebuilding, I investigate different roles of photography in a conflict situation. Lastly, I will briefly consider how this project contributes to possible roles

of theology in the public sphere, particularly for peacebuilding in our times.

## **Concepts of Peace and Peacebuilding**

Peace is not a simple concept. Building peace is perhaps even more complicated. To unravel a complicated problem of conflict requires a sophisticated and holistic approach to the questions: what is peace, what are the roots of conflict, and how does one build a peaceful future? For building peace in a conflict situation, thus, we first need to understand the complexity of peace and conflict. Additionally, we should understand that there are different concepts of peace and practices of peacebuilding.

The negative and positive peace frame is perhaps most well-known and widely used for the definition of peace (Galtung 1969). As a narrow concept, peace is often defined as the “absence of violence”, which is called the “negative peace”. However, the concept of peace as the absence of violence cannot be a complete definition of peace because it is not clear what violence is. To define peace, we should first understand and define violence. Johan Galtung, a founding scholar of modern peace studies, has provided a useful typology of violence. He has suggested different levels of violence, characterized by elements such as whether the violence is personal or structural, direct or indirect, physical or psychological, and whether there is a subject (person) or not.<sup>1</sup> These distinctions are important because they provide a theoretical basis of peace studies as a subject of social science, by categorizing and locating elements of violence.

In the positive peace frame, peace is not simply the absence of violence but the absence of potential causes of violence in society.<sup>2</sup> Hence, the aim of peace research can be understood as seeking to eliminate causes of violence, such as inequality and injustice, in social systems. In this way, peace studies focus not only on conventional subjects such as politics and economics, but also on more contemporary topics such as gender, race, environment and cultural studies.

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<sup>1</sup> Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 183-186.

The expanded understanding of violence can be divided into three levels: direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence. In a similar, though not identical, way, there are three approaches which can respond to violence: peacemaking, peace-keeping, and peace-building.<sup>3</sup> In general, peacemaking refers to a diplomatic action to negotiate conflicts; whereas peacekeeping describes the deployment of armed forces to intervene as a buffer zone and to enforce a ceasefire agreement. While peacekeeping aims to protect people from direct violence, peacemaking focuses on social structure through the policy making process. Both models have limits. With regard to peacekeeping, there is a moral dilemma that peace can be maintained by unjust power and force. Peacemaking is criticized for the top-down approach that an elite group speaks for country, while neglecting small NGOs, local agents, and indigenous resources.

Lastly, the term “peacebuilding” refers to a long-term strategy to reduce or avert possible conflict. To do this, it is crucial to understand the roots of conflict in society. In the study of peacebuilding, there are arguably two dominant approaches: one is the problem-solving approach and the other is the critical paradigm (Cox 1981).<sup>4</sup> First, the problem-solving approach is based on the optimistic belief “we can fix it” and until recently formed the mainstream of peacebuilding studies in the United States (Crocker, Hampson and Aall 2005).<sup>5</sup> It focuses on how to resolve a conflict (problem) and aims to produce an effective strategy based on scientific analysis of a conflict situation.

The other approach is the critical paradigm that argues ‘the problem-solving is merely engaged in superficial short-term fixes that fails to ask wider questions about power relations in society.’<sup>6</sup> Up until this time, the critical literature predominantly

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<sup>3</sup> David Little, "Peace, Justice, and Religion," in *What Is a Just Peace?*, ed. Pierre Allan and Alexis Keller (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Sapir Handelman, "Peacemaking, Peacebuilding and Peacekeeping: The Challenge of Change in the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict," *Israel Affairs* 23, no. 3 (2017).

<sup>4</sup> Roger Mac Ginty, *Routledge Handbook of Peacebuilding*, Peacebuilding (London: Routledge, 2013). See Introduction and Chapter One.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



appears in Europe, the UK, and the Global South (Richmond 2005; Chandler 2010; Roberts 2011;).<sup>7</sup> Roger Mac Ginty maintains,

This literature [critical research] questions the underlying bases of conflict and dominant approaches to peacebuilding. In particular, it has developed a critique of the ‘liberal peace’ or the dominant form of peace-support intervention favoured by leading states, international organisations and international financial institutions.<sup>8</sup>

Mac Ginty is one of a number of scholars who criticize the problem-solving approach. These and other critical observations are useful to bear in mind. First, the understandable desire by outsiders simply to ‘fix it’ does not necessarily lead to a lasting solution because there are limits to how well external observers can understand the specific roots of a protracted conflict. Second, in particularly serious cases, solutions based on limited understanding of the local context can inadvertently become a cause of another conflict. Mary Anderson, for instance, has highlighted the danger of international aid becoming a source of conflict.<sup>9</sup> Finally, high level solutions may not lead to sustainable solutions because they have a tendency to overlook the importance of the local community while focusing on the elite group like policy makers.

Similarly, relating to the concept of conflict, peacebuilding is divided into another two approaches: conflict resolution and conflict transformation.<sup>10</sup> The term “conflict resolution” is more widely used than “conflict transformation”. Conflict resolution refers to the underlying thesis that conflict is a problem to be solved.<sup>11</sup> A

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Mary B. Anderson, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace--or War* (Boulder, Colorado; London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999).

<sup>10</sup> There are also other terms such as conflict management and conflict mediation. They may or may not be seen part of peacebuilding because management and mediation practices generally indicate negotiation process between group leaders. It would be too narrow to consider as peacebuilding that I am using in this thesis.

<sup>11</sup> For example, one of the leading academic journals in peace studies is the Journal of Conflict Resolution. The Journal of Conflict Resolution (JCR) published by Sage Publishing was ranked at the 11<sup>th</sup> out of 165 journals in Political Science and the 5<sup>th</sup> out of 86 journals in International Relations. One of the top leading institutions in the field is the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (S-CAR) at George Mason University, Virginia in US.

number of studies based on the problem-solving approach are ‘policy-oriented and interested in offering a “solution” to the problems faced by international organizations and INGOS’, but this literature tends ‘to be apolitical in the sense that it avoids major questions of where does power lie’.<sup>12</sup>

On the other hand, the concept of “conflict transformation” is relatively new in the peace and conflict studies but developing rapidly.<sup>13</sup> Conflict transformation scholars can even view conflict as an opportunity instead of a problem (Lederach 2003; Dayton and Kriesberg 2009; Lederach and Appleby 2010).<sup>14</sup> John Paul Lederach,<sup>15</sup> who coined the term, maintains that ‘conflict is a normal and continuous dynamic within human relationships’. He continues,

[C]onflict brings with it the potential for constructive change. Positive change does not always happen, of course. As we all know too well, many times conflict results in long-standing cycles of hurt and destruction. But the key to transformation is a proactive bias toward seeing conflict as a potential catalyst for growth.<sup>16</sup>

In this thesis, my underlying concept of peacebuilding draws not only upon the critical perspectives discussed above, but also upon this conflict transformation approach. Peacebuilding, rooted in critical research and an understanding of the importance of conflict transformation, contributes to developing a holistic approach and cultural sensitivity, which is required to understand conflict. This peacebuilding and conflict transformation approach is useful for this thesis for two reasons. First, the

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<sup>12</sup> Mac Ginty, *Routledge Handbook of Peacebuilding*. 3.

<sup>13</sup> The Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at Notre Dame University (USA) and the Center for the Justice and Peacebuilding at the Eastern Mennonite University (Virginia, USA) are leading academic institutions in the field.

<sup>14</sup> John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*, Conflict Transformation (Intercourse, Pa.: Good Books, 2003); Bruce W. Dayton and Louis Kriesberg, *Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding : Moving from Violence to Sustainable Peace* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009); John Paul Lederach and R. Scott Appleby, *Strategic Peacebuilding: An Overview* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>15</sup> John Paul Lederach is not only a founding scholar in the field who coined the term “conflict transformation” but also an influential scholar in peace studies world widely. He is based on his Anabaptist/Mennonite tradition and applies his sociological perspective into the peacebuilding studies by emphasizing the importance transformational process of conflict through people, relationship and community.

<sup>16</sup> Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*. 15.

transformational approach provides a useful lens to *look* (pay attention) and *see* (understand) the complexity of conflict. Lederach stresses a holistic approach to a conflict, by providing four dimensions of conflict, namely as personal, relational, structural, and cultural conflict.<sup>17</sup> It is because a constructive and sustainable change is only possible with a deep understanding of conflict. Moreover, it focuses on a relational aspect of conflict. As Lederach correctly points out, every conflict happens between people and groups. A relationship is fundamental to understand the roots of conflict. In particular, a relational approach enables one to take into account the emotional aspects of a conflict, which has often been neglected in the problem-solving paradigm.

Framing conflict as *relational* is particularly important because it also means that conflict is *communicative*. From the conflict transformation perspective, dialogue is key to promoting peace. Lederach maintains that ‘a fundamental way to promote constructive change on all these levels is dialogue’ on both an interpersonal and a structural level.<sup>18</sup> It means that dialogue is an essential medium of peacebuilding. In practice, the conflict transformation scholars emphasize not only the importance of dialogue but also the skill of dialogue.

We typically think of dialogue as direct interaction between people or groups. Conflict transformation shares this view. Many of the skill-based mechanisms that are called upon to reduce violence are rooted in the communicative abilities to exchange ideas, find common definitions to issues, and seek ways forward toward solutions.<sup>19</sup>

In my view, dialogue as direct interaction is key to communication between people and groups, but it would also be important to use indirect communication such as art and media. Art and media is a form of cultural dialogue that also interacts between people and groups. Michael Shank and Lisa Schirch claim that, ‘While art is not purely functional, it can serve social functions. Art is a tool that can communicate and transform the way people think and act. Arts can change the dynamics in intractable

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 23-27.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 21.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 21-22.

interpersonal, intercommunal, national, and global conflicts.<sup>20</sup> The role of art and media in the peacebuilding field is pivotal because of its social function as it forms social meaning systems such as identity, values, and worldview.

## Two Models in Arts and Peacebuilding

This thesis focuses on the medium of photography in relation to peacebuilding. To use photography as a bridge to peacebuilding, I will first discuss two approaches in the arts and peacebuilding research. Research on the arts and peacebuilding is growing rapidly, and crossing over various genre of the arts and media: Craig Zelizer<sup>21</sup> and Michael Shank<sup>22</sup> (art activism); John Paul Lederach<sup>23</sup> and Lisa Schirch<sup>24</sup> (creative process of peacebuilding); Marian Leibman<sup>25</sup> (Art Therapy); Russell Bronson, Zephryn Conte and Shelley Masar<sup>26</sup> (Youth Program); Cynthia Cohen (aesthetic theory and theatre);<sup>27</sup> Augusto Boal, Jan Cohen Cruz, Michael Rohd and Patricia Sternberg<sup>28</sup> (Theatre).

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<sup>20</sup> Michael Shank and Lisa Schirch, "Strategic Arts-Based Peacebuilding," *Peace & Change* Vol. 33, no. 2 (April 2008). 218.

<sup>21</sup> Craig Zelizer, "Artistic Response to the Siege of Sarajevo: The Cellist and the Film Festival in Bosnia-Herzegovina" in Paul van Tongeren and European Centre for Conflict Prevention., *People Building Peace II : Successful Stories of Civil Society*, A Project of the European Centre for Conflict Prevention (Boulder, Colo.: L. Rienner Publishers, 2005). 301-308. See also his latest book Craig Zelizer, *Integrated Peacebuilding : Innovative Approaches to Transforming Conflict* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2013).

<sup>22</sup> Michael Shank, "Redefining the Movement: Art Activism," *Seattle Journal for Social Justice* 3/2 (2005).

<sup>23</sup> John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>24</sup> Lisa Schirch, *Ritual and Symbol in Peacebuilding* (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2005).

<sup>25</sup> Marian Liebmann, *Arts Approaches to Conflict* (London; Bristol, PA.: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1996).

<sup>26</sup> Russell Bronson, Zephryn Conte, and Shelley Masar, "The Art in Peacemaking," ed. The National Center for Conflict Resolution Education (USA: the National Endowment for the Arts and the Department of Justice, 2002). [www.arts.gov/pub/ArtinPeacemaking.pdf](http://www.arts.gov/pub/ArtinPeacemaking.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> Cynthia Cohen is Director of the program in Peacebuilding and the Arts in Brandeis University. See the project "Acting Together on the World Stage" at [www.actingtogether.org](http://www.actingtogether.org) (Accessed 5 May 2018); and Cynthia E. Cohen, "A Poetics of Reconciliation: The Aesthetic Mediation of Conflict" (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of New Hampshire, 1997). Also see Leslie Yalen and Cynthia Cohen, "Focus on Coexistence and the Arts" (Massachusetts: Coexistence International at Brandeis University, 2007).

<sup>28</sup> Augusto Boal, *The Rainbow of Desire: The Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy* (London; New

In the relationship between the arts and peacebuilding, the conflict transformation framework provides a useful backdrop. There are, broadly, two ways of dealing with the arts as a medium of peacebuilding—one is a strategic approach and the other is a critical approach. A strategic approach deals with how to use the arts effectively for peacebuilding practices with the specific questions: *what, when and how?*<sup>29</sup> A critical approach, by contrast, focuses on understanding social and cultural dynamics and roots of conflict in society.

The strategic approach often has an underlying presupposition—the arts are good. There is a tendency to see a positive side of the arts and its impact. The aim of the strategic approach is how to maximize the function of the arts for peacebuilding, more correctly peacebuilding practitioners and their programs. In spite of many advantages, the strategic scholars often overlook the role of the artist, the historical context and its relation to the society. This is because the strategic approach is targeting practices or practitioners rather than artworks or artists.

The art is a useful tool of peacebuilding, but it can be the opposite. Since the role of arts is ambivalent like a double-edged sword, it can be used both defensively and offensively. *The arts as a tool* can be dangerous when practitioners use the arts for their own purpose, while paying less attention to its quality and content. Rather, they see how publicly influential or politically important they are or how effective—arousing or stirring, to move people's emotions. My concerns are that utilizing arts as a tool of peacebuilding can be criticized that it is manipulation of arts for their own purpose and it may reduce artists' creativity.

The second way of placing the arts in peacebuilding is the critical approach. The critical approach does not limit the arts as a tool but rather focuses on the nature

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York: Routledge, 1995).; Jan Cohen-Cruz, *Radical Street Performance: An International Anthology* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1998).; Michael Rohd, *Theatre for Community, Conflict and Dialogue* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1998).

<sup>29</sup> Shank and Schirch, "Strategic Arts-Based Peacebuilding," 220-239. Shank and Schirch emphasize a practitioner's role who is asked to decide how to use which medium in what context. Giving examples and concepts, they help practitioners produce the most effective outcome in response to the intensity and stage of a conflict. Shank and Schirch divide a range of conflicts into four stages—conflict escalation, conflict management, conflict transformation, and conflict prevention. In this context, they suggest four themes and tasks in using arts—waging conflict nonviolently, reducing direct violence, building capacity, and transforming relationship.

of the arts and its social function in a historical context. In other words, the arts are deeply connected to more fundamental roots in our society such as beliefs, values, ideology, and worldview. It would be useful to look at the sociological and cultural analysis studies such as Scott Appleby,<sup>30</sup> Pierre Bourdieu,<sup>31</sup> and Jean Baudrillard.<sup>32</sup> The critical approach rather focuses on the dynamic between the arts and society, the roots of conflict and structural conflict, and the usage of the arts in making both conflict and peace, and the roles of artists and audiences.

In this thesis, I draw upon this critical approach. My aim in this thesis is not to offer a strategic way to use photography as a tool of peacebuilding. But rather, I will take a closer look at how photography functions in a conflict situation—that is, how photography can(not) be *used* for building peace in a specific context. I acknowledge the ambivalence of art in a conflict situation whether it can be used for promoting peace or inciting conflict. Thus, my task will be to investigate critically *to what extent photography can be used for building peace*. Among various art mediums, I will particularly focus on photography, because of the distinctive connection with peace/conflict.

## Placing Photography in Peacebuilding

Photography, in spite of its significance to our society, is less explored in the peacebuilding studies than other mediums such as film, drama or other visual arts. Nevertheless, in the era of media, photography has been playing a pivotal role through reporting conflicts and advocating peace and justice. Some photographs are symbols that represent a certain war or conflict. Some photographs open people's eyes, witnessing injustice and violence from another part of the world. Due to some photographic images, a change actually happens through humanitarian acts, relief aids and rescues or intermediations between groups and nations.

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<sup>30</sup> R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Lanham, MD; Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000).

<sup>31</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Randal Johnson, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). Also see Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996).

<sup>32</sup> Jean Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production*, trans. Mark Poster (St. Louis: Telos, 1975). See also *The System of Objects* (London: Verso, 1996).

Since its invention, photography has had social characters and influences (Berger 1972; 1981; Tagg 1993; Clarke 1997; Long 2009; Warner 2010; Wells 2015). There is a perspective that photography is merely a machine that records facts as historical evidence and is politically neutral and should be so. However, photography, as more photographers and critics responded, is never politically neutral because photographic images are often manipulated by photographers, manipulated by photographers and editors, and interpreted by audiences differently.<sup>33</sup>

Photography in the media outlet has played a pivotal role in dealing with war and conflict since its invention (Brothers 1997; Marwil 2000; Allan and Zelizer 2004; Linfield 2010; Kennedy 2011; Batchen et al. 2012). As Susan Sontag has argued in *On Photography* (1977), photography changed our behavior from “doing” to “seeing”.<sup>34</sup> With regard to war reporting, the invention of the camera changed news accounts about war from a subject to listen and imagine drawing upon a witness’ testimony into a subject to see through photographs. In other words, Photography brought greater immediacy and promoted greater emotional engagement with the news. From this time onward, war and conflict has become a subject to be represented visually, and mediated and circulated through the media.<sup>35</sup>

In the history of photography, there is a tendency that war has been a more popular subject than peace.<sup>36</sup> Particularly during the period of early war photography (1850s-1900s), journalists focused on how to visualize war realistically—what war looks like, what is happening in a battlefield, and how horrible war is. We can remember, for example, early war photographers such as Roger Fenton (the Crimean War, 1853-56) and Alexander Gardner (the American Civil War, 1861-65).

Entering to the twentieth century (1900s-1950s), war photography advanced intensively with the development of technology such as the invention of a hand-held camera and roll films. World War I was the first war that journalists brought such

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<sup>33</sup> For the history of photography from a social and cultural perspective, see the Introduction written by Edward Welch and J. J. Long in J. J. Long, Andrea Noble, and Edward Welch, *Photography: Theoretical Snapshots* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009).

<sup>34</sup> Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 1990).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> See Sabine Kriebel, "Theories of Photography: A Short History," in *Photography Theory*, ed. James Elkins (New York; London: Routledge, 2007).

cameras and films. Within the context of the twentieth century, the golden age of war photography emerged, producing iconic and controversial war photographs such as “the Falling Soldier” from the Spanish Civil War (Robert Capa 1936) and “the Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima” from the Second World War (Joe Rosenthal 1945).

War photography had both advantages and disadvantages. Unlike paintings, photographic images could be mass produced easily and circulated widely so that it played a role of “informer” about war to the public. By contrast, mass-produced images and their circulation could weaken a viewer’s moral sensibility as being numbed to the pain of others, by being exposed those images repeatedly.<sup>37</sup> My intention is not to argue whether war photography is positive or negative.<sup>38</sup> Despite these concerns, reporting wars and conflicts is important and necessary. Rather, it is important to ask how photography was used or mis-used in war reporting. In the first chapter, I will further consider war photography and its effect from a peacebuilding perspective.

There are critiques that photography can be harmful to building peace because of the uniqueness of photography and the way in which it is interpreted. Unlike other forms of representation, photography’s interpretive nature is less obvious (Grundberg, 1990a, 1990b; Richin, 1989).<sup>39</sup> Sontag points out that people tend to believe photographic images as objective truth based on fact. Audiences tend to view photographs with less criticism.<sup>40</sup> Also seen in the case of war photography, violent photographs created spectators who watched the pain of others in a distant country.<sup>41</sup> Sontag asks both producers and audiences to have deep introspection to “us” and compassion to “the others”. In this respect, it is not enough to simply report images of other’s pain in conflict; yet alternative ethical standards are given to photographers, producers and audiences in dealing with the pain of others within the global

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<sup>37</sup> Regarding the relationship between photography and compassion, I will discuss in the third chapter.

<sup>38</sup> In the first chapter, I will further discuss on war photography and its relationship with peacebuilding.

<sup>39</sup> Recited from Loup Langton, *Photojournalism and Today's News: Creating Visual Reality* (Chichester, U.K.; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009). 5.

<sup>40</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*.

<sup>41</sup> Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003).



community.

Photojournalism, sometimes, has been partially biased to one's own group or nation, and the photographic images have been controlled and abused by the media for political purposes. The photographs selected and shared by the media are often violent and incendiary. Certain images are repeatedly used over and over. As a result, the images are imprinted in people's mind as "stereotypical" of the particular conflict. Moreover, the stereotyped images dominate a way of thinking and communicating on an individual level—sometimes in the public sphere as well.

Finally, photography in journalism can be politically biased and commercially manipulated. Professional photographers take photos because it is their job. Even if they have creativity and moral sense, the final decision whether to be published or not is often given to the editor of a company. Newsworthiness—what is news and what is not, is dependent on an editor's decision, an editor who is employed by a company that makes money through the news. Therefore, we need to realize how photojournalism can be abused for different purposes than what we see and believe. Michael Kaufman, founder and co-editor of the *Impact Visuals*, argues:

Objectivity is basically a myth that some major media people delude themselves with. What you're seeing in a picture is real, but it's an edit. Maybe the coverage that we saw of the [first] Gulf War with all of its pictures of the high-tech weapons had very little to do with the war or why our troops were sent over there. It became sort of a sales pitch for weapons systems although it turns out that many of the things that were photographed at the time were not real in terms of how they actually performed. They were real planes; they really were flying, but you saw only part of it. That was only one edit on what really happened.<sup>42</sup>

From the second chapter to the sixth chapter, the main body of the thesis, I will ask reversely: if war photography fails at building peace, can we find examples of peace photography?

One good example of the critical approach is Jolyon Mitchell's *Promoting Peace, Inciting Violence* (2013). Mitchell does not simply see the media as a tool of peacebuilding but rather examines the ambivalence of the media particularly relating to religious symbolism. In the introduction of his book, Mitchell describes the aim of

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<sup>42</sup> Recited from Langton, *Photojournalism and Today's News: Creating Visual Reality*. 7.

his book as being ‘to tease out the “ambivalence of the sacred”, and also the ambiguities involved in promoting peace and violence, in a number of different communicative contexts.’<sup>43</sup> He provides a variety of visual examples of the religious ambiguities in promoting peace or violence through different religious traditions—in the first part, inciting violence, and the second part, promoting peace, which is less explored in the field. Likewise, my aim in this thesis is ‘to tease out’ the ambiguity of photojournalism involved in promoting peace and violence and to explore alternative ways for building peace through photojournalism.

This work to tease out the ambiguity of photography, as well as the sacred, will be helpful in developing the public role of the church for building peace. My hope is that this thesis provides a critical lens for the community of faith to understand roots of conflict at a cultural level. By doing so, the church would take a role of the community of alternative interpretation to visual representations related to peace and conflicts. I therefore argue that the church, drawing upon a cultural understanding of conflict and the value of critical engagement with photography, can contribute to peacebuilding in our society.

### **Contribution to Church and Theology**

At the 2013 Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh, the former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams delivered a series of lectures entitled “Making Representations: Religious Faith and the Habits of Language”.<sup>44</sup> He argued that the form of language by its nature cannot contain the whole meaning of reality, especially about God. In theological dialogue, words are crucial, but its excessive usage can be a cause of distortion of the knowledge of God. He suggests two forms of language, *descriptive* and *representational* language, in our religious faith; and highlights the importance of representational language, nonverbal language, such as arts, dance, meditation, and even silence.

During the lectures, Williams was invited to the Theology and Ethics Seminar

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<sup>43</sup> Jolyon P. Mitchell, *Promoting Peace, Inciting Violence: The Role of Religion and Media*, Media, Religion, and Culture (New York: Routledge, 2012). 5. Mitchell quotes the term ‘ambivalence of the sacred’ from Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation*.

<sup>44</sup> The lecture was published a year later. See Rowan Williams, *The Edge of Words : God and the Habits of Language* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

at New College, University of Edinburgh, a weekly seminar for graduate students. Five PhD students, including myself, responded to his lectures and discussed them together. In my response, I questioned whether a photograph(s) was descriptive or representational. While he did not answer directly, he did highlight the importance of the arts as a form of representational language. My own response was that photography can be both descriptive and representational. From a communication perspective, when a photograph is descriptive rather than representational, it can be a cause of conflict between people and groups. By contrast, a photograph as representational language can be a space for personal and interreligious dialogue. This public conversation contributed to my own evolving thinking and this research.

Williams' concept of "descriptive and representational language" offers several insights for this thesis. He suggests that representational language can be a space of communication between different religions. This approach helps to reduce miscommunication and to enhance interreligious dialogue by modifying our habits of language about the knowledge of God. His argument is not only based on natural theology, following the tradition of the Gifford Lectures, but it also creates an alternative way of building peace among many (partly religiously inspired) conflicts.

In my view, his lecture is a good example of public theology in regard to peace and conflict issues. Although his argument and methodology is not conventionally theological, he provides a space for public discussion. For building peace, I have argued that we need a holistic approach which means we also need wisdom from different perspectives and disciplines. To do this, we need a common language at the discussion table for building peace, and public theology can be a partner at the discussion table.

The concepts and theories of public theology are diverse (Jacobsen 2012; Kim & Day 2017).<sup>45</sup> The term "public theology" was probably first used by Martin Marty in 1974 when discussing Reinhold Niebuhr's thoughts on American civil religion.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> The most recent work on public theology is Sebastian C. H. Kim and Katie Day, *A Companion to Public Theology* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2017). For the general history of public theology, see the Introduction.

<sup>46</sup> Martin E. Marty, "Reinhold Niebuhr: Public Theology and the American Experience," *The Journal of Religion* 54, no. 4 (1974). (Recited from Eneida Jacobsen, "Models of Public Theology \*,"

Debates on public theology were more dominant in the North American context particularly during the 1980s and 1990s, led by David Hollenbach,<sup>47</sup> David Tracy,<sup>48</sup> Charles Taylor,<sup>49</sup> Max Stackhouse,<sup>50</sup> and Ronald F. Thiemann.<sup>51</sup> In the background of the debates on public theology during the period, these advocates of public theology sought to distance themselves from the nationalistic impulse of American civil religion.<sup>52</sup>

Since the 2000s, the field has been growing rapidly, particularly outside of the U.S. notably in Europe, South Africa, and Australia. In the U.K., ‘unlike the U.S. where individual scholars are leading discussions on the topic’, a number of academic institutions for public theology have been established within universities and denominations.<sup>53</sup> In 2006, for example, the Global Network for Public Theology (GNPT) was established in Edinburgh with a membership of 25 centres and institutions worldwide. Moreover, the International Journal of Public Theology (IJPT) provides a place for interdisciplinary research across different subjects and areas.

In 1984, the Centre for Theology and Public Issues (CTPI) was established as the world’s first centre for research on public theology at New College, University of Edinburgh.<sup>54</sup> Duncan Forrester, a Scottish theologian and the founder of the CTPI, has emphasized the role of church and theology in the public sphere.<sup>55</sup> The CTPI has been

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*International Journal of Public Theology* 6, no. 1 (2012). 7-8)

<sup>47</sup> David Hollenbach, "Public Theology in America: Some Questions for Catholicism after John Courtney Murray," (1976).

<sup>48</sup> See William Myatt, "Public Theology and ‘the Fragment’: Duncan Forrester, David Tracy, and Walter Benjamin," *International Journal of Public Theology* 8, no. 1 (2014).

<sup>49</sup> See Robert A. Kelly, "Public Theology and the Modern Social Imaginary," *Dialog: a Journal of Theology* 50, no. 2 (2011).

<sup>50</sup> See Max L. Stackhouse, *Public Theology and Political Economy: Christian Stewardship in Modern Society* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991); Max L. Stackhouse, Deirdre King Hainsworth, and Scott Paeth, *Public Theology for a Global Society: Essays in Honor of Max L. Stackhouse* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2010).

<sup>51</sup> See Ronald F. Thiemann, *Constructing a Public Theology: The Church in a Pluralistic Culture* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991).

<sup>52</sup> Kim and Day, *A Companion to Public Theology*. Introduction. 3-5.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. 6.

<sup>54</sup> The CTPI was the first institution for public theology in the world.

<sup>55</sup> Duncan B. Forrester (10 November 1933 – 29 November 2016) was a Scottish theologian and the

engaging theologically in different public issues such as public health, national identity, economics, poverty aid, justice, global health, sectarianism, and media violence and peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding is perhaps one of the most important and urgent public issues in our times. It is the primary task that the church has faced and been involved in. Currently directed by Jolyon Mitchell, the CTPI focuses on several peacebuilding projects, among these is the *Peacebuilding through Media Arts* project.<sup>56</sup> Especially, the CTPI hosted the workshop titled “Visualising Peace: Photography, Conflict Transformation, and Peace Building” during 13th-17th June 2017 at New College, University of Edinburgh. The workshop focused on the relationships between peace and photography and the possibility of “peace photography” through 13 presentations of scholars crossing different disciplines and subjects. The work of CTPI, including this project on photography, has also provided significant insights and influences on this thesis, including the way in which it broadened my understanding of public theology in regards to media arts, especially photography.

Developing a method for this kind of public theology is complicated because public theologians have no single framework or approach. Dirk Smit argues that ‘there exist no single and authoritative meaning of public theology and no single normative way of doing public theology’.<sup>57</sup> Sebastian Kim highlights the complexity of the task and the multiplicity of approaches used:

The question of the appropriate method for engaging in the public sphere is not an easy one, and the variety of forms taken by public theology suggests there are a number of legitimate ways of doing it. This is not only because the theologians who are seeking to apply theology to public life come from a variety of sub-disciplines, such as theology, religious studies and social ethics. It is also because public theology is done in a variety of different social and political contexts that both constrain and

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founder of the Center for Theology and Public Issues (CTPI) at New College, University of Edinburgh, UK. The CTPI was established in 1984 and it is the oldest research center for public theology in the world. Forrester worked on the intersection between theology and politics, focusing on Scotland, UK and Europe. He became later honorary fellow and emeritus professor at New College. The CTPI currently runs the Peacebuilding through Media Arts project which is related to this thesis.

<sup>56</sup> Visit the website of the CTPI at <http://ctpi.div.ed.ac.uk/>.

<sup>57</sup> Dirkie Smit, "Notions of the Public and Doing Theology," *International Journal of Public Theology* 1, no. 3 (2007). (Recited from Jacobsen, "Models of Public Theology \*." 8).

shape its methods.<sup>58</sup>

Another related set of observations can be found in the later work of Duncan Forrester who suggested that drawing upon “theological fragments” is one way of engaging in the public discourse (2005). He begins his introduction: ‘There is an important place today for a modest and unsystematic theology, consisting of “theological fragments” rather than some grand theory.’ He continues,

Theological fragments, as I understand them, arise from, and relate to, specific situations, problems, contexts, issues, and communities. But often insights from one specific situation are found to be of more general relevance. A theology of fragments hopes to contribute to throwing some light on what is going on, and challenging to constructive and faithful practice today.<sup>59</sup>

Forrester’s perspective is better explained with the concept of conversation in a public discussion table. Sebastian Kim views that the key word of public theology is public *conversation*. He argues:

There is an urgent need for Christian theology to be actively engaged in conversation on public issues with the understanding that it can offer complementary or supplementary approaches, and even alternative solutions, to the very complex issues facing society today.<sup>60</sup>

Similarly, this thesis does not offer a single theological frame or approach for building peace through photography. Instead, each chapter of the thesis will use different theological concepts to consider each subtheme of chapters: truth, justice, forgiveness, reconciliation, witness, compassion, nonviolence, healing, and forgiveness. It may be argued that Williams, Kim, and Forrester have different understandings of public theology; but their perspectives on public theology can be converged as public theology for public conversation. *Conversation* (or communication) is equally significant in both fields as peacebuilding and media studies. In my thesis, I hope to provide arguments and theological perspectives that will contribute to, and enrich

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<sup>58</sup> Kim and Day, *A Companion to Public Theology*. 14.

<sup>59</sup> Duncan B. Forrester, *Theological Fragments : Explorations in Unsystematic Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2005). ix. (Recited from Myatt, "Public Theology and ‘the Fragment’: Duncan Forrester, David Tracy, and Walter Benjamin." 86.

<sup>60</sup> Kim and Day, *A Companion to Public Theology*. 3.

broader conversations on peacebuilding.<sup>61</sup>

## Methodology

In this thesis, I will focus upon different representations and interpretations of the May 18<sup>th</sup> Gwangju Democratic Uprising which took place in Gwangju, South Korea, between 18<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of May 1980. The May 18<sup>th</sup> Democratic Gwangju Uprising (or the Gwangju Uprising) is one of the most tragic incidents in modern Korean history. After President Park Chung-hee's assassination on 26<sup>th</sup> October 1979, the political situation in South Korea rapidly became unstable. On 12<sup>th</sup> December 1979, Chun Doo-hwan, a commander of the Security Command, led a military coup by proclaiming martial law, which is called "the 12/12 Incident".

From that time, there were a series of protests requesting democracy and an end to dictatorship over the nation. On 17<sup>th</sup> May 1980, protesters, mainly professors and students of universities in the Gwangju area gathered at the Geum-nam street in front of the city hall of Gwangju. They marched peacefully and continued their demonstrations through the day. The following day, the situation suddenly changed. Chun Doo-hwan sent special troopers to suppress the protest and the troopers began to beat people in the place, whether or not they were protesters, at random. Their excessive use of force went too far, and resulted in violent conflict as the citizens of Gwangju organized a militia to protect their families from the brutal violence of the martial law troopers.

The peaceful protest for democracy and the city of Gwangju suddenly became a site of a massacre. It only took less than 10 days—although the victims' loss and grief have been long lasting. The number of victims was reported: 154 killed, 74 missing, and 4,141 wounded (including those who subsequently died).<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Religion is also part of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. In most cases, identity is a key factor of a conflict. Religion provides a fundamental basis of one's group identity. To understand a root of a conflict, it is necessary to understand religious background. In this fashion, religious studies such as comparative theology or interreligious dialogues become more important in today. Moreover, each religious tradition has a depth of wisdom regarding peace, justice, and harmony.

<sup>62</sup> The May 18 Memorial Foundation, *The May 18th Gwangju Demoractic Uprising* (Gwangju: South Korea: The May 18th History Compilation Committee of Gwangju City, 2007). 61.

On the other hand, it became a trigger of the nationwide democratic movement against dictatorship, the June Uprising in 1987, which resulted in the end of the military dictatorship and the development of democracy in Korea. UNESCO accepted the May 18<sup>th</sup> Gwangju Democratic Movement and the vast amount of resources, such as official documents, photographs, films, newsletters, and victims' testimonies, as the World Heritage of Document in 2014.<sup>63</sup> Among the resources, photographs played a crucial role as historical records and documents for social motivation. For example, the truth about the Gwangju Uprising was quickly spread through photo exhibitions in different regions.

There are a considerable number of research projects dealing with the Gwangju Uprising from different perspectives.<sup>64</sup> Many works generally focus on historical research to reveal who was responsible for the tragedy and how to compensate victims. In recent years, new approaches to the event have analyzed it from a social science perspective. Choi Jung-woon, a professor in politics and international relations at Seoul National University, examines the meaning of the Gwangju Uprising from a political theory perspective such as "grand narrative" and "absolute community" theory.<sup>65</sup> Related to the media usage during the event, alternative forms of arts and media were used such as paintings, prints, murals,

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<sup>63</sup> UNESCO, "Human Rights Documentary Heritage 1980 Archives for the May 18th Democratic Uprising against Military Regime, in Gwangju, Republic of Korea," ed. Memory of the World Register (2011).

<sup>64</sup> See Lee Jae-eui, *Kwangju Diary: Beyond Death, Beyond Darkness of the Ages*, trans. Seol Gap-soo and Nick Mamatas, UCLA Asian Pacific Monograph Series (Los Angeles: UCLA Press, 1999); Gi-Wook Shin and Kyung Moon Hwang, *Contentious Kwangju : The May 18 Uprising in Korea's Past and Present* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003); Kim Young-khee and Han Sun, "The Gwangju People's Uprising and the Construction of Collective Identity: A Study on the Fighters' Bulletin," *New Political Science* 25, no. 2 (2003); Kim Hong-gil, "A Study on the Reconstruction of Memorial Politics of Gwangju Peoples Uprising and Changes in Gwangju Community," *The Korea Civic Ethics Society Journal* 20, no. 1 (2007); Kim Hang, "The Commemoration of the Gwangju Uprising: Of the Remnants in the Nation States' Historical Memory," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 12, no. 4 (2011); Kim Hee-song, "A Study on the Meaning and the Actualization of Gwangju Community May 1980," [Theological Perspective.] *Shinhak Jeonmang*, no. 190 (2015); Si-min Yu, Sang-yong Chŏng, and Saŏphoe Minjuhwa Undong Kinyŏm, *Memories of May 1980: A Documentary History of the Kwangju Uprising in Korea*, Kwangju Minjung Hangjaeng : Dak'yument'ŏRi 1980english (Seoul: Korea Democracy Foundation, 2003).

<sup>65</sup> Choi Jung-woon, *The Gwangju Uprising : The Pivotal Democratic Movement That Changed the History of Modern Korea* (Paramus, N.J.: Homa & Sekey Books, 2006).



pamphlets, and street drama (Oh 2011; Kim 2015).<sup>66</sup> In this way, this thesis is a small contribution to expand the horizon of research on the event.

This thesis is interdisciplinary research across multiple subjects such as history, journalism and media studies, cultural studies, and theology. It consists of six main chapters, each of which is also interdisciplinary. In the first chapter, I will discuss war photography and its function from a peacebuilding perspective. The first chapter is more theoretical exploring the relationship between photography and war/conflict, reviewing the history of war photography between the mid-19<sup>th</sup> and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in the U.S. and U.K.

From the second chapter to the sixth, each chapter draws upon a range of literature and material to explore different kinds of practices: revealing truth, representing suffering, resisting violence, remembering painful history, and restoring justice and reconciliation. These five chapters are seeking to answer the central question of the thesis: “To what extent can photography be used for building peace?”, while also considering a number of related questions.

Chapters Two through Six contain several levels of discussion: photo description, peacebuilding theory, media studies, and theological reflection. I analyze five photographs taken during the Gwangju Uprising. The five images are part of the photobook *May, We Saw!* (2004) published by the May 18 Memorial Foundation.<sup>67</sup> The photographs in the book were taken by four Korean journalists during the event: Hwang Chong-jun, Kim Nyung-man, Na Kyung-taek, and Shin Bok-jin.<sup>68</sup> I picked the five photographs not only because they are widely circulated, but also as they relate

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<sup>66</sup> Sebastian Kim, for instance, focuses on minjung arts and artists during the period. Oh Eun-ha outlines alternative media such as pamphlets and street drama at the time. See Sebastian Kim, "Peace-Building through Minjung Art in Korea," in *Mediating Peace : Reconciliation through Visual Art, Music and Film*, ed. Sebastian Kim, Pauline Kollontai, and Sue Yore (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015); Oh Eun-ha, "Media Activism in the Kwangju Uprising (Korea)," in *Encyclopedia of Social Movement Media*, ed. John Downing (Los Angeles, CA; London: SAGE, 2011).

<sup>67</sup> May 18 Memorial Foundation, *May 1980 Gwangju, We Saw!* (Gwangju, South Korea: May 18 Memorial Foundation, 2004).

<sup>68</sup> All of them were professional photojournalists: Hwang Chong-gun and Kim Nyung-man worked at the *Dong-A Ilbo*. Na Kyung-taek and Shin Bok-jin worked at the *Chonnam Maeil Ilbo* and the *Gwangju Ilbo*. The photographs are available in the digital archives: the May 18 Memorial Foundation ([www.518.org](http://www.518.org)) and the May 18 Archives ([www.518archives.go.kr](http://www.518archives.go.kr)).

to and enrich my discussion of each chapter's central theme.

In this thesis, photography can be seen both as a focal point and method of my research. As Gunilla Holm points out, photographs are distinguished from images in the way in which 'images can also include such things as artwork, cartoons, drawings, and maps' (Holm 2014).<sup>69</sup> Photography is one of major methods in visual research and used across social science such as anthropology (Harper 2004), sociology (Collier & Collier 1986; Prosser 1996; Grady 1996; Pink 2007), psychology (Reavy 2011; Mavica & Barenholtz 2012; Clements 2012), and education (Clark & Moss 2001; Clarke 2004; Grosvenor et al. 2004; Einarsdottir 2005; Grosvenor 2007a; 2007b; Devlieger et al. 2008; Prosser & Burke 2008; Serriere 2010).<sup>70</sup>

I chose photography because it is a useful tool for qualitative research. Photography as a research method can be criticized because of its ambiguity (Holm 2014). Photographs are constructed by photographers in certain contexts, not simply portraying reality.<sup>71</sup> Thus, researchers should be aware of three aspects behind a photograph such as a photographer's intention, the intended audience(s), and the individual viewer(s).<sup>72</sup> Related to this thesis, I acknowledge that the five photographs I have chosen are socially constructed materials so that my task is to read and interpret their apparent meaning not only to intended audiences but also to individual viewers.

I read and analyze the photographs in the way of qualitative research instead of quantitative. The quantity of photographs is not critical in qualitative research using photography. Consider, for instance, how Holm offers two opposite examples of scholarly uses of photography. Steet (2000) analyzes a hundred years of photographs of the Arab world in the *National Geographic*, while Magno and Kirk (2008) focus on only three photographs 'when examining how development agencies use photos of

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<sup>69</sup> Gunilla Holm, "Photography as a Research Method," in *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Patricia Leavy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). 382.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. 381-382. (References are recited from Gunilla Holm's work)

<sup>71</sup> It is evident in the photographs by early British anthropologists because they are representing their colonialist perspectives. See Douglas Harper, "Photography as Social Science Data," in *A Companion to Qualitative Research*, ed. Uwe Flick, Ernst von Kardorff, and Ines Steinke (London: SAGE, 2004). (Recited from Holm, "Photography as a Research Method." 383.)

<sup>72</sup> Holm, "Photography as a Research Method."

girls to promote their agencies' work concerning the education of girls'.<sup>73</sup>

In this thesis, the five photographs are specific examples that show how each photograph can be used for peacebuilding. Photographs in visual research are commonly divided into three types: archival photographs, photographs taken by researchers, and photographs taken by participants.<sup>74</sup> As the photographs are archival photographs taken by photojournalists, my task is to analyze how each of the photographs can help to engage in peacebuilding.

My photo reading mainly draws upon content analysis with such criteria as surface meaning, narrative, intended meaning, ideological meaning, oppositional reading, and coherency (Holm 2014). To do this, I follow three principles. First, I read the images from an audience's perspective. Since I am interested in different roles of photography in peacebuilding, I try to describe the images to my readers from an audience's perspective so that I consider the impact(s) of the photographs on the audience and the relationship between the images and the audience. Second, I seek to find the photographers' intentions while I describe the images. I acknowledge that the images were produced by photojournalists which means each of the photographs contain the photographers' intentions, this affects the framing (angle and distance), time sequence, image quality, and caption. I also reference different interviews with photojournalists and the photobooks they published. Lastly, I read the photographs within the historical context of the Gwangju Uprising. The photographs were primarily historical records of the uprising. Thus, it is significant to keep reading and interpreting the photographs in the socio-political context.

For my content analysis, I acknowledge that there is a possibility that my interpretation of the photos is influenced by my personal, social and ethnographic background. Holm cautions about 'the impact of the researcher's and participant's habitus on the interpretation of photographs'. Since I am Korean, I cannot be free from my national identity and culture when I research the Korean context, and more especially—the Gwangju Uprising. Technically speaking, however, I was not directly involved in the event because the event occurred during my childhood. I was born and

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

grew up in Seoul which has a different cultural understanding of the event from the city of Gwangju and Cholla province. In this respect, I am in the middle between those who are from the Gwangju area and foreigners who are not familiar with Korean history. Thus, my task will be to bridge the two sides.

### **Brief Outlines of the Thesis Chapters**

The brief outline of each chapter is as it follows. In the first chapter, as mentioned above, I will explore the relation between photography and peacebuilding, mainly focusing on “war photography” in the history of photography particularly between the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. To see the relation between photography and peace, I will rethink war photography during the period in the way in which it was a moral response to the matter of war and violence. Specifically, I will look at two movements in war photography during the time—*realism* and *surrealism*—in ways in which two different photography movements responded to the matter of war. Then, I will rethink the role of war photography from a peacebuilding perspective, by focusing on the concept of “distance” between photographs and audience.

In the second chapter, I will consider how a photograph reveals truth in a violent conflict situation, focusing on the concept of “bearing witness” in the media. Truth is crucial when dealing with the painful past, in moments such as the Gwangju Uprising. I will consider the role of photography as bearing witness to the truth. In comparison with the concept of “eye witnessing”, I will examine how photographs contributed to bearing witness to the truth of the violent event. In this fashion, I will focus on the importance of journalists and their roles.

The third chapter will consider the theme of suffering and compassion. As photography plays a pivotal role in representing suffering, I will focus on how photography can represent a victim’s suffering properly and promote compassion. To do this, I will first look at the theory of compassion fatigue (especially as espoused by Susan Sontag and Susan Moeller). I will further explore this theme through analysis of social documentary photography in the mid-twentieth century in the United States.

In both this third chapter and the previous chapter, the victims of the Gwangju Uprising are represented as passive *objects* captured by the camera, as they suffer from the violence. Building upon the first three chapters, I will turn to consider more active

cases than passive ones. In the following two chapters, the role of victims become more active as an agent of change who resisted violence, reconstructing their painful memory and identity through photography.

In the fourth chapter, I will therefore consider how a photograph may have the potential to transform violence by mobilizing audiences to engage critically with memories of violence. In this context, photographs not only provide representation of violence and grief as seen in previous chapters, but also can play an active role in empowering people to overcome fear and resist violence nonviolently. This is why contemporary photography scholars and journalists still argue that photojournalism, especially with its violent images contained in what is sometimes described as war photojournalism, still has a valuable role. This is contrary to those who propose a compassion fatigue theory, arguing that repeated exposure to violent images can reduce moral sensibility.<sup>75</sup> In other words, even though photography can produce cultural fatigue from overwhelming violent representations, it can also promote moral sensibility and social actions against violence.

In the fifth chapter, I will consider the role of photography in the aftermath of violent conflict, mainly focusing on the relationship between remembering and painful history. Based on cultural memory theories such as Maurice Halbwachs and Aleida and Jan Assmann, I contend that a social identity can be reconstructed by the process of remembering. I will argue that a photograph can be a tool for remembering the painful history rightly, mainly focusing on reconstruction of identity and healing of cultural trauma (Hicks 2002; Volf 2006). I will focus particularly on the case of the May 18 Gwangju Uprising which as observed earlier happened in May, 1980 in South Korea. Through the case, I will show how a photograph contributes to the practice of remembering the painful history rightly.

In the final chapter, I will focus on reconciliation and restorative justice as an alternative approach to building a just *and* peaceful society in the aftermath of a conflict such as the Gwangju Uprising. Because of the relational aspect of

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<sup>75</sup> E.g. David Campbell's "The Myth of Compassion Fatigue" in Liam Kennedy and Caitlin Patrick, *The Violence of the Image: Photography and International Conflict*, International Library of Visual Culture (London/New York: I.B. Tauris & Co., 2014). Also see Susan D. Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War, and Death* (New York: Routledge, 1999).; and Sontag, *On Photography. & Regarding the Pain of Others*.

reconciliation and restorative justice, I argue, the approach can promote moral imagination that overcomes the limits of the current juridical justice system. Reconciliation can be not only the end of peacebuilding, but also a practical guideline for achieving both peace and justice.

This thesis is an outcome of my experimental attempt to bridge three different but related subjects: photography, peacebuilding and public theology. This work is relatively new and may appear not fully developed from a single perspective among three subjects. Nevertheless, I believe that we need more interdisciplinary research, particularly in media arts, on peace and conflict. Perhaps I may not emphasize enough the significance of peacebuilding for justice and reconciliation but what I hope through this research is to contribute to shedding a light on the constructive role of photography for peacebuilding, by giving a critical perspective to read and interpret photographs and representations of war and conflict in our times.



## **CHAPTER 1. RETHINKING WAR PHOTOGRAPHY FROM A PEACEBUILDING PERSPECTIVE**

In this chapter I consider the relationship between photography and peace/war, mainly focusing on the history of war photography particularly between the mid-19<sup>th</sup> and the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. What is the relationship between photography and war? What is the role of photography in war journalism and its impact on the audience? Responding to these questions, I draw upon three areas of ongoing research, relating to photography, journalism, and peacebuilding theories.

This chapter considers interpretative theories relating to the role of photography in the media reportage of war and conflict. The aim of this chapter is to investigate two war photography movements, *realism* and *surrealism*, in the context of war. My contention is that these war photography movements were moral responses to the realities of war. My aim is also to examine how the photography movements were not fully successful in building peace. It is because, I argue, they failed to provide “appropriate distance” in dealing with war.

In order to make this argument I will first briefly sketch the history of photography, focusing on the development of war photography. Secondly, I will discuss the realism movement in early war photography (1850-1900) and surrealism movement (1900-1950). Thirdly and lastly, I argue for the importance of applying the lens of peacebuilding to photojournalism. In this context, I discuss and analyze John Paul Lederach’s metaphor of the lens for understanding the practice of peacebuilding, while also arguing for the importance of a holistic approach to building peace.

### **1.1 A History of Photography as Moral Responses to War**

#### **1.1.1 A Brief History of War Photography (1840-1900)**

In early photography, from 1840 to 1900, people were attracted by the magical function



of a camera—that is, its objective description of the reality.<sup>76</sup> The virtue of the camera used to be thought to be its purity obtained by the process without human intervention, except clicking the shutter. In the fashion, people tended to believe that photography is “magically” objective in documenting and illustrating of an event.

Few, if any believe such a myth today. Along with the development of technology, photojournalists did not stay back from the camera, but developed ways to adjust the images as they wanted to see them. Its usage gradually became more socio-political and even propagandistic to sustain a power system and ideology. Photography is not merely a machine but a social medium operated by a photographer (and published by the press and read by an audience in a social context).

In relation to war, the role of photography has been more dynamic in the general history of photography. With the invention of photography in the 1830s, people were enthusiastic about photography as an objective means of capturing events. It seemed revolutionary that it would enable human society to have “truth” through the objectivity of photography without human interruption.<sup>77</sup> Unlike painting, photography seemed to represent the reality of the world. Before photography, a battlefield was rarely a thing to see, but rather something to hear and to imagine. People who sent their loved ones to war had to wait in fear for news about the outcome of the conflict. Photography changed people’s perception of war and of the battlefield, from something to imagine to something to see. The image of war and its cruelty were originally blurred like an abstract painting beyond our ordinary life; and now, it regularly comes very close to us—into our living rooms and bedrooms, most private places, through the form of media; and the images of war are more realistic than our imagination as if it is not real.

In the early war photography, because of the limitations of photographic technology, it was difficult to provide realistic depictions of war in detail. The

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<sup>76</sup> See “Photography’s Early Evolution, c. 1840-1900” in the History of Photography from the Online Encyclopaedia Britannica. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/457919/history-of-photography/252845/Early-views-of-the-mediums-potential#toc252846> (Accessed 2 October 2017)

<sup>77</sup> Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 1990). 10-12. As Sontag noticed, taking a photograph is already an act of interrupting and engaging in an event because a photographer could decide not to take an action other than a photograph especially when the photographer shoots objects in violent or dangerous situations.

daguerreotype, the early form used to develop an image on a silver plate, took so long that it was hardly possible to capture a moving target. Early war photographers had to travel with their darkrooms and equipment in wagons and it took time to set up their large-format cameras. Hence, they normally remained in the military camp instead of the battle field and took images of soldiers, camp life and supplies. For instance, John McCosh, known as the first official war photographer, a Surgeon in the Bengal Army, documented images such as army officers, artillery emplacements, and the destructive aftermath during the Second Sikh War in 1848-9.<sup>78</sup>

Those images were mostly directed by photographers. Although the early styles of war photography were born within the limits of early photographic technology, the impact of the war photographs was profound. As Naomi Rosenblum points out, to those viewers who were used to artistic depictions of wartime heroics, 'the absence of uplifting tone in camera documentations was especially shocking because the images were unhesitatingly accepted as real and truthful.'<sup>79</sup> Photography came to take the place of paintings and sculptures—from depicting war heroics through imagination to representing the reality of war through a cold machine.

These early war photographs changed perceptions of war from imagining to seeing. Seeing people and places as they actually were, 'they thought they were seeing the Crimea as if they were actually standing there.'<sup>80</sup> 'Panoramic landscapes of war,' as Jonathan Marwil explains, 'conveyed a sense of reality that was novel and impressive to a 19<sup>th</sup>-century audience.' After viewing Fenton's war photographs exhibition in 1985, Paris, an English reviewer commented:

... real evidence, and indeed, but for colour, unsurpassable. When men draw a scene, there may be error – but when the scene draws

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<sup>78</sup> John Hannavy, *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography*, 2 vols. (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2008). 1467-1471. Although there were a number of daguerreotyped photographs taken by an unknown photographer during the Mexican-American War in 1847, they were not produced with the purpose of journalism. For the details, see Mary Warner Marien, *Photography: A Cultural History*, 3rd ed. (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2010). 45-49.

<sup>79</sup> Naomi Rosenblum, *A World History of Photography*, 3rd ed. (New York: Abbeville Press, 1997). 182.

<sup>80</sup> Jonathan Marwil, "Photography at War," *History Today* Vol. 50, no. 6 (June 2000). 33.

itself there can be no mistake. It is nature seen through a square mirror, and transferred to the mirror.<sup>81</sup>

Such words showed people's perception of photography when it was new. They were fascinated by photography not only because the photographs were realistic but also because they were new scenes that they had never seen before. These panoramic photographs became popular entertainments for people in that time. Since then a camera was in every soldier's pack to capture the unknown world.<sup>82</sup>

From the second half of the nineteenth century, the subjects of war photography were changed from the panoramic scene and the portraits of soldiers to the dark sides of war, more direct images such as dead soldiers and scenes of devastation. By commissioning Thomas Agnew and Sons Publishers, Roger Fenton, well-known British photographer, went to the Crimean war and finally exhibited his photographs in 1856 in London. Although most of his photographs were not directly representing the violence of war, one of his photographs, *The Valley of the Shadow of Death* [App. 1], aroused strong responses from the audience (Mitchell 2007; Marien 2010).<sup>83</sup> Marien argues, 'Fenton may have assumed that few people would want to see or to buy images of suffering and carnage. Interestingly, the public and press did not raise issues of content—Fenton's photographs were praised by critics for their factual quality and superiority to words.'<sup>84</sup>

From the mid-nineteenth century, the government and press came to focus on the potential of war photography for their own ideas such as recruiting soldiers and raising social issues on war. One of the reasons that photographers such as Roger Fenton and James Robertson became popular was because their photographs were published in various newspapers and issued in multiple photographic prints.<sup>85</sup> War photography began to be used with different purposes. 'Perhaps most important was,'

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Marien, *Photography: A Cultural History*. 102. Also see Jolyon P. Mitchell, *Media Violence and Christian Ethics*, New Studies in Christian Ethics (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). 129-130.

<sup>84</sup> Marien, *Photography: A Cultural History*. 103.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

as Marwil maintains, ‘the growing respect and concern accorded to the common soldier.’<sup>86</sup> The British press finally began to cover the suffering of ordinary soldiers in war. In February 1855, the magazine *Punch* published a cartoon which aroused public attention to the poor treatment of soldiers in war, with the words below:

‘Well Jak! Here’s good news from Home. We’re to have a Medal.’

‘That’s very kind. Maybe one of these days we’ll have a coat to stick it on?’<sup>87</sup>

Through the photographs and journalistic coverage, soldiers were gradually regarded as fellow citizens—sons, brothers, fathers—not as ‘scum of the earth’ in war.<sup>88</sup> From the Crimean war through to the American Civil War, war photography played its role as growing public awareness of war and public empathy for soldiers and victims as seen in Gardner’s *Photographic Sketch Book of the Civil War* (1866). Photography was increasingly becoming important in dealing with war through the newspapers as camera technology developed.

Technological developments enabled war photography to take more realistic representations of war than ever. Dry plates reduced exposure. With the emerging of the halftone plate, photographers came to be able to reproduce photographs onto the printed page, simplifying a process for engraving and creating a better quality of objectivity.<sup>89</sup> Near the end of the nineteenth century, the Eastman Kodak company introduced its revolutionary small portable, hand-held cameras to the world. Photographers had greater mobility than ever so that they could take photographs more intimately and spontaneously. Moreover, the invention of transparent celluloid roll film in 1889 accelerated the practicability of the hand-held cameras. Now, war photographers could go anywhere without difficulties, even in the midst of battlefields. The use of photography to depict war helped create a new cultural form,

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<sup>86</sup> Marwil, "Photography at War." 35.

<sup>87</sup> Artist Unknown, “Well Jak! Here’s good news from Home. We’re to have a Medal.” “That’s very kind. Maybe one of these days we’ll have a coat to stick it on?” Printed cartoon. *Punch*, February 1855. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

<sup>88</sup> Marwil, "Photography at War."

<sup>89</sup> Loup Langton, *Photojournalism and Today's News: Creating Visual Reality* (Chichester, UK; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009). 16.

photojournalism, this enabled people to “see” wars as well as hear about them. Witnessing wars became one of the most important tasks in photojournalism.

### 1.1.2 Photojournalism and War

The combination of war and photography became the most dynamic subject in photojournalism in the US and Britain. The early war photographs were attractive enough to draw people’s attention and fascinate their audiences. Also, those who worked for the government and the press knew it. Jonathan Marwil describes the beginning of war photojournalism:

[...] photography was celebrated as a truth-telling technology, practiced as a fine art, and exploited for its commercial potential. War was only one of many subjects that lured early photographers, but it was one that promised a large audience, given its inherent appeal as spectacle and its habitual role in the shaping of national identities. Conveniently, after 1939 there were a number of wars, large and small, that engaged European and American photographers.<sup>90</sup>

With technological progress, the social context after the mid-nineteenth century also welcomed the appearance of photography. As Jussim argues, ‘Photojournalism existed and still exists – in a context that includes economics, politics, technology, the attitudes of the public, the ideologies of critics, and, ultimately, teachers and purveyors of knowledge and information.’<sup>91</sup> The press such as editors and owners of publications started to think about how to manage photography more effectively because they realized the public’s appetite for illustrated journals and their growing interest in photography.<sup>92</sup> Thus, the press tried to employ freelance photographers as their staff photographers to obtain the images that both the editors and advertising companies wanted.

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<sup>90</sup> Marwil, "Photography at War." 31.

<sup>91</sup> Marianne Fulton and Estelle Jussim, *Eyes of Time: Photojournalism in America* (New York: Little Brown Book Group Limited, 1988). 38.

<sup>92</sup> Langton, *Photojournalism and Today's News: Creating Visual Reality*. 16. The needs for photographs from different groups caused publishing companies to change their formats of journalism. National Geographic Magazine in 1888 was one of the examples published for a well-educated and urban audience. Photography becomes an important partner of publications.

Photography gradually became one of the most important marketing tools for publications from the 1900s. In the sensational press, photographs were used to illustrate stories for the sake of increasing their readership—such as catastrophes, crime, violence, and the unusual.<sup>93</sup> After the American Civil War, particularly with the appearance of the hand-held camera and roll film, photographers could document war more visually as it happened, which ‘instilled in news consumers the belief that photographs offered proof of war’s horrors.’<sup>94</sup> *Collier’s Weekly*, for instance, sent Jimmy Hare, one of the pioneers of war photography, to Cuba, and his photographs resulted in the increase of its circulation and advertising.<sup>95</sup> Up until then, war photography appears to be one of the most successful marketing tools in the visual media.

In the relationship with politics, politicians and national leaders also realized the considerable influence of photography on the public. For example, John Tagg shows how photography has been used by the British government as a way of dominating the public. Tagg argued that photography changed the way history and public records are documented—particularly criminal records; and visual records branded criminals (or anti-government people) as a group of evil and vice and versa. For Tagg, photographs are not evidence of history but representations of the historical.<sup>96</sup> In war photography, the military came to sense that some war photographs gave negative influences on the public such as promoting empathy with soldiers and victims in war.<sup>97</sup> Thus, they tried to control war photographers and the press by reinforcing censorship. It seemed however inadequate to stop the flow of war photojournalism.

With the advent of photography, war was not something to imagine anymore but a visual reality. During 1840-1900, people were fascinated by the realistic representations of war and wanted to see more photographs. The press and advertising

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid. 18.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. 19.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. 19-20.

<sup>96</sup> See John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

<sup>97</sup> Langton, *Photojournalism and Today's News: Creating Visual Reality*. 20-21.

companies knew what the public wanted to see—rather than imagine. Perhaps, people would lose their capability of thinking without photographic images. National leaders were particularly interested in the potency of photography. Photography changed many things in the human society from ways of perceiving, through ways of thinking, to ways of participating. After photography, people's communication has been dramatically changed. It seems that images talk rather than we talk, or we talk through images. Particularly in responding to war, photography became a central medium to debate war in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, sometimes it was too realistic and sometimes too surrealistic.

## **1.2 Two War Photography Movements: Realism and Surrealism**

### **1.2.1 Realism in War Photography**

War and photography are closely connected in the history of photography. There were and still are different motivations and reasons for war photography. Among them, one serious approach is related to how to stop war in human history. Witnessing to the horrors of war to a public living in another world is a key role of photojournalism. During World War I and II, the relationship between war and photography seemed inseparable. Some photographers and activists believed that showing the photographic truth would help end the war. They believed it would be more effective as photographic representation became more realistic, that is, more violent and cruel!

Ernst Friedrich (1894-1967) was one of them, perhaps the most radical pacifist and anti-war activist during this time. Against the Nazi regime, Friedrich wrote *War against War* (1924) to promote pacifism both in and outside of Germany.<sup>98</sup> He mobilized people to stand up against the Nazi's violent war and lectured on pacifist thinkers such as Erich Mühsam, Maxim Gorki, Fjodor Dostoevsky and Leo Tolstoy.<sup>99</sup> The noticeable thing is Friedrich's usage of photographs. In 1923, Friedrich established the international anti-war museum and had an exhibition with numerous images of war atrocities; a year after, he published *War against War* with images from

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<sup>98</sup> Ernst Friedrich and Douglas Kellner, *War against War* (Seattle: Real Comet Press, 1987).

<sup>99</sup> See <http://www.anti-kriegs-museum.de/english/history.html> (Accessed 14 October 2017)

the collection. Susan Sontag describes the unusual photographs as shock therapy:

This is photography as shock therapy [...] The book starts with pictures of toy soldiers, toy cannons, and other delights of male children everywhere and concludes with pictures taken in military cemeteries. Between the toys and the graves, the reader has an excruciating photo-tour of four years of ruin, slaughter and degradation: pages of wrecked and plundered churches and castles, obliterated villages, ravaged forests, torpedoed passenger steamers, shattered vehicles, hanged conscientious objectors, half-naked prostitutes in military brothels, soldiers in death agonies after a poison-gas attack, skeletal Armenian children.<sup>100</sup>

Among the photographs, the most horrible part is the section entitled ‘The Face of War’ [App. 3], twenty-four close-ups of soldiers with huge facial injuries. What was the immediate response to those photographs, so realistically horrible? Certainly, as Friedrich expected, this sensational book suddenly became popular in and outside Germany. The anti-war museum became the centre of the anti-war movement for pacifists and anarchists. In spite of the government’s regulation of publishing and selling the book, by the 1930s, *War against War* had gone through ten editions in Germany and been translated into many languages.<sup>101</sup>

As Sontag points out, the twenty-four close-up photographs are ‘unbearable’ to look at. Why did Friedrich need those unbearable photographs? Why did he ask his audience to bear the uncomfortable scenes—or uncomfortable truth? He thought people should know the truth about the war and dictatorship; and believed if people face the reality, more horrible than ‘the Face of War,’ they would change their thoughts and stand up for ending the war. Friedrich’s shock therapy seemed successful for a while. From thinkers through artists to activists, those who criticized the Nazi government gave their enthusiastic support and their anti-war movement rapidly spread beyond Germany.

In 1938, Abel Gance, a French film director, ‘featured in close-up some of the mostly hidden population of hideously disfigured ex-combatants – *les gueules cassées* (‘the broken mugs’) they were nicknamed in French – at the climax of his new

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<sup>100</sup> Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003). 13.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. 14.



*J'accuse!*.<sup>102</sup> Like Friedrich, *J'accuse* also ends in the military cemetery scene. However, as Sontag argues, Gance's tone is darker than Friedrich, that is, apocalyptic rather than realistic. His apocalyptic expression on the horrors of the war was a sort of warning to society. He therefore uses more horrible scenes.<sup>103</sup>

'Morts de Verdun, levez-vous!' (Rise, dead o Verdun!), cries the deranged veteran who is the protagonist of the film, and he repeats his summons in German and in English: 'Your sacrifices were in vain!' And the vast mortuary plain disgorges its multitudes, an army of shambling ghosts in rotted uniforms with mutilated faces, who rise from their graves and set out in all directions, causing mass panic among the populace already mobilized for a new pan-European war. 'Fill your eyes with this horror! It is the only thing that can stop you!' the madman cries to the fleeing multitudes of the living, who reward him with a martyr's death, after which he joins his dead comrades: a sea of impassive ghosts overrunning the cowering future combatants and victims of la guerre de demain. War beaten back by apocalypse.<sup>104</sup>

In response to war and violence, Friedrich and Gance tried to look at the reality and its violence very closely. Both have the underlying belief that looking at the truth, seeing how violent war is, would change people and the world. The belief did not last long and the passion for ending the war disappeared as quickly as a fever. In 1939, one year after *J'accuse* had come out, the Second World War began.

### 1.2.2 Critique: Too Shocking to Bear It

Photography's realistic representation of war helps people to get a better visual understanding of war. But it does not necessarily guarantee the audience's moral response. As a photographer takes an object by one's perspective, aim and context, the audience perceives the photograph(s) differently in their context. In the Vietnam War, the role of war photography was powerful to evoke the sense of human right and just-war. In the case of the Korean War, on the other hand, most of the US citizens were disinterested in the same ethical issues because it was during the Cold War period.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. 15.

<sup>105</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*. 17-18.

People see as they want to see. Photographers frame as they want to frame. The media manipulate people through photography as the media want. In the base deeper than others is an ideology and historical context. A camera captures a moment and freezes it permanently, separated from a history, but the perception and usage of a photograph is changed individually and socially.

More importantly, it is worth asking whether realism in war photography is able to stop violence. Beside visual information, photography can give a moral sense, but it cannot make an audience moral. It may evoke a feeling that something is wrong, but does not guarantee people change their lives. Photography gives a shock when it shows something new. Recalling her experience, Sontag calls it as ‘negative epiphany’ as the prototypically modern revelation when she encountered with the photographic images of ultimate horror.<sup>106</sup> However, ‘to suffer’ is another story, separated from ‘living with the photographed images of suffering: which does not necessarily strengthen conscience and the ability to be compassionate.’<sup>107</sup> Seeing violent images can rather corrupt our moral ability:

Once one has seen such images, one has started down the road of seeing more—and more. Images transfix. Images anesthetize. An event known through photographs certainly becomes more real than it would have been if one had never seen the photographs—think of the Vietnam War. (For a counter-example, think of the Gulag Archipelago, of which we have no photographs.) But after repeated exposure to images it also becomes less real.<sup>108</sup>

War photography in the early period should be a revelation to most of the audience. By developing the technology, people could get a more real sense of war than before. However, photography as shock therapy such as Friedrich’s *War against War* and Gance’s *J’accuse!* failed their ideal goal and even corrupted the moral ability, by making them addicted to violence like pornography:

The same law holds for evil as for pornography. The shock of photographed atrocities wears off with repeated viewings, just as the surprise and bemusement felt the first time one sees a pornographic

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid. 19.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. 20.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

movie wear off after one sees a few more. [...] The vast photographic catalogue of misery and injustice throughout the world has given everyone a certain familiarity with atrocity, making the horrible seem more ordinary—making it appear familiar, remote (“it’s only a photograph”), inevitable.<sup>109</sup>

This is an irony. The close-up and realistic depiction of photographs can make the audience feel familiar, remote, and helpless. Such a phenomenon becomes worse today. In the past fifty years, along with international wars, numerous war images have been produced by the media and the image of horrors of war become common, banal, and everyday.<sup>110</sup> We have become ‘politically and ethically numb—hypnotized by the hypodermic needle of visual media.’<sup>111</sup> Jolyon Mitchell argues, ‘Compassion Fatigue may be a journalistic cliché to some scholars, but for others it is a reality that finds its roots in the apparently neverending repetition of images of suffering and violence.’<sup>112</sup> As Mitchell correctly points out, we live in ‘violence fatigue’ which brings a sense of powerless to the audience.<sup>113</sup>

Also we live in the death of realism. Carolyn Kane maintains ‘that reality has imploded into its inverse, a hyperreal—a series of media effects and simulations—is not an uncommon view among contemporary critical theorists.’<sup>114</sup> These critical theorists, such as Jean Baudrillard, Paul Virilio and Slavoj Žižek, diagnose the fundamental obstacle in the media-based society as the absence of truth, origin, authenticity, and reality.<sup>115</sup> In his book *Ecstasy of Communication*, Baudrillard shows ‘how media images brought too close, made too real, and as a result, have imploded into their opposite: a ‘hyperreal’ that simulates reality in a better, yet more artificial,

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid. 20-21.

<sup>110</sup> Quoted from Carolyn L. Kane, "Satiated and Denied: War and Visual Realism," *Afterimage* Vol. 39, no. 1/2 (2011). See Carolyn L. Kane, “*The Failure of Images*,” (2011), which can be seen at <http://vimeo.com/22175048> (password “Failure”).

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Mitchell, *Media Violence and Christian Ethics*. 33.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. 34.

<sup>114</sup> Kane, "Satiated and Denied: War and Visual Realism."

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

fashion.<sup>116</sup> Also in *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, Baudrillard controversially and provocatively argues what the media witnessed was not a real war but a media spectacle.<sup>117</sup> Virilio claims that today's international wars cannot be identified or located any more compared to the civil war.<sup>118</sup> Thus, witnessing war from one side cannot hold the truth.

More significantly, visual representation of a reality produces another reality by recycling the images. According to Žižek, on September 11, many people who encountered a real trauma, but what actually controlled their memory of reality was visual representations in the media. Even before their trauma occurred in their mind and life, without giving any moment to retrospect, the media produce the image of what happened as a reality. As a result, people come to depend on the images produced by the media, not their own reality. Žižek argues therefore 'what happened on September 11 was not that reality entered our image: the image entered and shattered our reality.'<sup>119</sup>

So far, we discussed realist war photography and its impact on today's life. The realism movement in photography can be understood as a perspective that focused too much on violence. It was too close between photography and violence or photography and audience. Realism blinds people's eyes by focusing on violence alone, recycling same images, and as a result, producing a hyperreal world. In the following chapter, we will discuss on the other approach, surrealism in war and photography.

### 1.2.3 Surrealist Photography during the World Wars

From the 1840s to the 1900s, the proximity between photography and war (as subject)

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> See Jean Baudrillard, *The Ecstasy of Communication*, Semiotext(E) Foreign Agents Series (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2012). and *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

<sup>118</sup> Paul Virilio and Sylvère Lotringer, *Pure War*, Rev. ed., Semiotext(E) Foreign Agents Series (New York, N.Y.: Semiotext(e), 1998). 7-13. Also see Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception* (London; New York: Verso, 1989).

<sup>119</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real!: Five Essays on September 11 and Related Dates* (London; New York: Verso, 2002). 16.

was too close for understanding of the reality in a way in which such realism photography failed to get the authentic perception of war. While the realism photography took a close-up shot relying on a mirror-function of the camera, surrealist photography abandoned the mirror-function and began to *distort* a subject by different techniques. Surrealist photographers wanted to express something fundamental, often psychic, based on their intuition, rather than focusing on external images of war. In the process of surrealist photography, the distance between photography and war as subject became far removed. In the following, I will look at the brief history of surrealist photography, its relationship with war, and its effect from the audience perspective.

In spite of its brevity the short period during and between the two world wars (1914-1945), was one of the richest periods in the history of photography. As mentioned earlier, the technological developments such as the 35mm camera with a roll of film fostered war photojournalism by giving better mobility. There were mixed tensions in different levels such as photographers, the militant censorship by the government, picture editors of the press, and the audience.<sup>120</sup> Nevertheless, photography became one of the most important mediums of journalism that formed social discourses on war.

Along with the growing usage of photography in journalism, photography as a medium of art developed rapidly. This explosive development of photography as art occurred immediately after the First World War (1914-17). It seemed an inevitable result that various artists focused on photography. 'In the aftermath of this first totally mechanized conflict, avant-garde artists, commercial illustrators, and journalists turned to photography as if seeking to discover through its mechanisms and materials something of the soul of contemporary industrial society.'<sup>121</sup>

In the 1920-30s, a so called "new vision" of photography emerged. László Moholy-Nagy described the new vision of photography as unconventional

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<sup>120</sup> See Photojournalism in Chapter 8 "Art and the Age of Mass Media" in Marien, *Photography: A Cultural History*. 235-238.

<sup>121</sup> Department of Photographs, "The New Vision of Photography," *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-). [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd\\_nvvis.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd_nvvis.htm) (Accessed 14 October 2014).

photographic forms and techniques rooted in the technological culture of the twentieth century such as abstract photograms, photomontages, the mixed work with photographs and modern typography and graphic design in posters and magazines.<sup>122</sup> The new vision of photography included the Bauhaus movement in Germany, represented by Moholy-Nagy, which ‘emphasized a rigorous objectivity ground in the close observation of detail’ and revolutionary constructivism in Russia, represented by El Lissitzky and Alexksandr Rodchenko, which ‘used a repertoire of defamiliarizing devices—extreme up and down angles, tilted horizons, fragmentary close-ups, abstracted forms—as part of an attempts to break old habits of perception and visual representation.’<sup>123</sup> In France, surrealism flourished as part of the new vision movement of photography.

In the midst of 1920s, the surrealist movement was born in Paris and became the centre for the avant-garde photographers in France between the wars.<sup>124</sup> Surrealism was officially launched by the poet André Breton with the publication of *Surrealist Manifesto* in 1924.<sup>125</sup> Surrealism emphasized ‘the primacy of the irrational and the belief in a truth beyond realism.’<sup>126</sup> The surrealists rejected reliance upon reason and considered reason as an obstacle in accessing the imagination. Deeply indebted to Freud’s theory, they focused the creative power of unconsciousness through irrational territories such as dreams, intoxication, chance, sexual ecstasy, and madness. ‘Rather than emphasizing social change on the state level, the surrealists advocated the transformation of human perception and experience through greater contact with the inner world of imagination.’<sup>127</sup>

Surrealism had no uniformed style and genre but was a self-proclaimed

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> André Breton, ‘What is Surrealism?’ translated and published in English in 1936 (Faber and Faber) by David Gascoyne and reprinted in Franklin Rosemont (ed.), *What is Surrealism?* (London: Pluto, 1989).

<sup>126</sup> Marien, *Photography: A Cultural History*. 253.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

movement beyond their backgrounds and genres.<sup>128</sup> Max Ernst and Tzara' had come from Dadaism, the non-sense activities. Paul Eluard and Benjamin Péret had come from poetry. Above all, photography played a central role in surrealist practice. Man Ray, friend of Marcel Duchamp, was a key figure of surrealist photography working in New York in the 1920s.<sup>129</sup> Under the influence of new vision of photography, surrealist photographers thought that 'making photographs could be the visual equivalent of free association and other methods of side-stepping the monitoring rational mind.'<sup>130</sup>

The styles and techniques of surrealist photography varied. Man Ray [App. 4] and Maurice Tabard liked to use such procedures as double exposure, combination printing, montage, and solarisation to evoke its dramatic effect of the mix between dream and reality. With the techniques of rotation or distortion, some photographers like Dora Maar [App. 5] created ugly, uncanny, and extraordinary images. Hans Bellmer [App. 6] used mechanized dolls for strangely sexualized images. Some photographers like André Kertész focused on the magic of coincidence and the presence of the mysterious in everyday life. Kertész's ideas influenced twentieth-century photographers such as Robert Capa and Henri Cartier-Bresson.<sup>131</sup>

In terms of the style, surrealist photography would seem to have no relation with war. In theory, however, surrealism was a moral reaction on the matter of wars through different art mediums. David Bate argues that 'surrealism was confronted with the reality of the social and political world through a colonialist war.'<sup>132</sup> André Breton considered that there were two periods in Surrealism, the first period (1919-24) and the second period (1925-34). Breton himself called the first period as the "intuitive" period and the second period as the "reasoning" period. Remembering that the early surrealists rejected reason but emphasized intuition, it is noteworthy to ask the reason for the change between two periods. Quoting Breton's speech in Brussels on 1 June,

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> David Bate, *Photography and Surrealism: Sexuality, Colonialism and Social Dissent* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004). 2-6.

<sup>130</sup> Marien, *Photography: A Cultural History*. 253.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. 253-259.

<sup>132</sup> Bate, *Photography and Surrealism: Sexuality, Colonialism and Social Dissent*. 2.

1934, Bate explains that surrealism began to shift its activity from an idealist one to a dialectical materialist one for the sake of protesting against the French colonialist war against Morocco.

No coherent political or social attitude, however, made its appearance till 1925; that is to say (and it is important to stress this) till the outbreak of the Moroccan war, which, re-arousing our particular hostility to the way armed conflicts affect man, placed suddenly before us the necessity of making a public protest ... [and] created a precedent that was to determine the whole future direction of the movement. Surrealist activity, faced with a brutal, revolting, unthinkable fact, was forced to ask itself what were its proper resources and to determine their limits; it was forced to adopt a precise attitude, exterior to itself, in order to continue to face whatever exceeded these limits.<sup>133</sup>

From the shift between two periods, we can find that the main concern of surrealism was not merely in rejecting rationalism but rather acting against the war. In short, at least for Breton, surrealism was born in the context of war and its goal was fundamentally concerned about the colonialist war in and outside of France. Although it is commonly agreed that surrealism was born in the context of war, the evaluations on surrealism as a moral response are divided.

In his exhibition *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* in 1936, Alfred Barr Jr., curator at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, described surrealism as:

[...] the contemporary movement toward an art of the marvellous and irrational.<sup>134</sup>

This is an example that shows a conception of early 'intuitive' surrealism in the first period (1919-1924). The idea of 'intuition' was originally derived from the work of Henri Bergson. Bergson believed that intuition is more important than rationalism for understanding reality.<sup>135</sup> Since he believed that 'pure intuition, [whether] external or internal, is that of an undivided continuity,' the surrealists attempted to show reality

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Alfred H. Barr, *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1937).  
13. Bate notes that this exhibition was 'a key moment in the introduction of surrealism to the USA prior to the migration of surrealists there'.

<sup>135</sup> Wikipedia on Henri Bergson. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henri\\_Bergson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henri_Bergson)



through the territory of intuition and irrationality.<sup>136</sup> Therefore, intuition and irrationality were means of surrealism, not the aim of it. And the aim of surrealism was ‘to contest and reformulate what could be included within a ‘rational’ conception of the world.’<sup>137</sup>

Surrealism is often understood ‘as a wish to *escape* from ‘reality’ into fantasy and the irrational.’<sup>138</sup> But viewing surrealism as irrational is a generalization based on a dichotomous perspective such as reality and fantasy, rationalism and irrationalism, objective and subjective, and common-sense and non-sense. But those oppositional distinctions are not always matched in surrealism. Such a simplistic view ‘fails to situate surrealist images within the aims of the movement at that time.’<sup>139</sup> As Bate argues, surrealism was not anti-rational but rather had a discursive power. The surrealists worked through their organizational skills, publications, and networks with other intellectual and political groups.<sup>140</sup>

Thus, surrealism is a wish ‘to combine reality and fantasy as a political project’ for the aim of rejecting ‘the military/psychiatric barbarism of the 1914-18 First World War.’<sup>141</sup> The traumatic experience of the First War not only disrupted notions of sanity and normality but also lead to disillusionment with human reason and rationality. Hence, the surrealists turned their eyes to Freud’s ‘psychical reality,’ acknowledging the presence of ‘everything in the psyche that takes on the force of reality for the subject.’<sup>142</sup> For them, fantasy is like a blueprint not only as rejection of war but also as a representation of unconscious desire for peace. Bate came to the conclusion as below:

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<sup>136</sup> Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1991). 183.

<sup>137</sup> Bate, *Photography and Surrealism: Sexuality, Colonialism and Social Dissent*. 7.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid. 6.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid. 7.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid. One example is *The Truth of the Colonies* exhibition (1931), organized by anti-colonialists to protest against the *Colonial Exposition* (1931) in Paris. Bate argues that surrealists actively supported and participated in the anti-colonialist movements. See Chapter 7 “The Truth of Colonies” for details.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Jean Laplanche and Jean Bertrand Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. D. Nicolson-Smith (London: Karnac Books, 1988). 363.

Thus, surrealism was not something which fled reality, rationalism or what is called the social world, but rather a discourse which entered into a critique and contestation over what was excluded as 'irrational' within it.<sup>143</sup>

So far, we have looked at surrealism as a moral reaction, as a social discourse against war, not just *escaping* from the reality into fantasy. Now we will look at the surrealist photography and the audience's response. The rest of this section will be considering several questions: Why did the surrealists use photography? How to read surrealist photographs? What was their response?

In the 'reasoning' phase of surrealism, the surrealists recognized that psychical representations could not be disconnected from the social and political context around them.<sup>144</sup> By using photography, they had dual tasks, one is to invoke a psychical reality, and the other is not to represent the material reality as it looks. For them, a camera was not a tool for representing the reality but a tool for combining the reality and fantasy by distortion. In other words, they wanted to provide a different way of looking to the reality beyond the external world. Thus, distortion of the subject (*objet*) is one of key techniques in surrealist photography.

#### 1.2.4 Critique: Too Distorted to Get It

My concern is that producing surrealist photographs and reading the photographs are separate. In spite of the surrealists' serious efforts, the photographic images themselves could not explain all the meanings, signs and a social discourse in the historical context. Without such information, what did the audience read from the distorted images in surrealist photography? How could the audience distinguish between *denotation* (the bare facts of the picture) and *connotation* (the cultural interpretations of it) of photographs?

Most theorists suggest a rhetorical analysis rather than a literal analysis provides a better reading of surrealist photographs.<sup>145</sup> Since the literal reading of

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<sup>143</sup> Bate, *Photography and Surrealism: Sexuality, Colonialism and Social Dissent*. 8-9.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid. 9.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid. 10.

photographs focuses on a one-to-one relationship of signifier and signified, audiences find only a descriptive meaning, but not a social meaning that the symbols imply. By contrast, since the rhetorical reading ‘treats images as singular but complex semiotic units,’ audiences are able to trace both descriptive and figurative meanings.<sup>146</sup>

Although the audience try to read surrealist photographs in the rhetorical way, it still remains as a difficult task. As Jacques Durand argued, ‘the rhetoricized image, in its immediate reading is heir to the fantastic, the dream, hallucinations: Metaphor becomes metamorphosis, repetition, seeing double, hyperbole gigantism, ellipsis, levitation, etc.’<sup>147</sup> In addition, reading surrealist photographs also requires a psychoanalytic approach. Audiences would follow the Lacanian approach that views ‘image and discourse’ or ‘image and language’; yet it is still difficult to read the language of unconsciousness.<sup>148</sup>

From my perspective, surrealist photography was a sort of high culture, which was made by and for the social elite. To common audiences, high art like surrealism is difficult and makes them unsure how to interpret correctly. I would argue that their images were not easily read by audiences at that time—even today. Bate argues that the surrealists were not much concerned with how the audience might ‘consume’ them, compared to the efforts of the surrealists for the production of uncanny and enigmatic images:

More than with any other avant-garde movement, surrealism cannot be understood simply by looking at the images. Although, in semiotic terms, we can easily read the basic denotations of old photographs, without any historical knowledge we are deprived of their historical ‘connotations’, those preconscious cultural values and knowledge that circulated at the time of the image and were ‘read’ by audiences.<sup>149</sup>

Thus, for better reading of surrealism, Bate maintains that audiences should distinguish

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid. 10-11.

<sup>147</sup> Jacques Durand, quoted from *Communications* (Vol. 15, 1970, 70-95) in Victor Burgin, *Thinking Photography*, Communications and Culture (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982). 10-16.

<sup>148</sup> Bate, *Photography and Surrealism: Sexuality, Colonialism and Social Dissent*. 11. Lacan was also a reader and participant in surrealism in France during that time.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

denotation and connotation. Initially, the audience should not go further than opaque meaning of images; instead, a social meaning of images should be understood within a specific historical context.<sup>150</sup>

I agree with Bate that surrealist photography should not be read by the literal analysis alone. As we have looked so far, surrealism was a social and moral movement against the French colonial war between the two world wars. And surrealist photography was a key means for surrealists to accomplish their end. They saw war as collectively rationalized violence, such as Nazism and Fascism, and aimed to stop the violence by invoking psychical realism and distorting material realism. Thus, surrealists attempted to produce surreal images—fantastic, enigmatic, occult, sexual, and uncanny. In short, as Bate maintains, by reading such images literally one is limited in grasping the original end of the artist. That is to say, a means becomes an end.

In one sense, we need to pay attention to the surrealists' original intention in the historical context. In the other sense, however, we also need to focus on the audience's perception of the images no matter what intention is in it. It is easy to guess that the audience at the time would be surprised and shocked by the uncanny images that they would have never seen before. In this respect, surrealism is certainly avant-garde, 'addressing the issue of desire and courting controversy by breaking moral codes, social taboos and risking arrest for some of their political acts.'<sup>151</sup> From a sociological perspective, Peter Bürger explains the avant-garde movement as a 'shock' strategy which intended to change a bourgeois culture, their outlook and conduct of life.<sup>152</sup>

Shock is temporary and cannot be a fundamental solution to the matter of war and violence. Although shock is not the aim of surrealists but a means, the function of shock seems quite dominant in surrealist photography, especially to the audience. I argue that, if surrealists aimed to stop war by the means of 'shocking' photography, it failed because it could not bring the audience into moral action. In spite of prudent

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid. 12.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid. 18.

<sup>152</sup> Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Theory and History of Literature (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984). 80.

intention in surrealist photographs, the shocking images themselves are so dominant that the images set the audience apart from the original meanings. In other words, because of the images, the audience sinks into the surreal territory, *escaping* from the reality.

The distortion-strategy of surrealism also brought a different result that they would not expect. Audiences came to perceive the distorted image in surrealist photographs as the reality. Abnormal became normal in the audience's perception—surrealism was not surreal anymore but created another perception of the reality. It seems fair enough when Sontag criticized Diane Arbus's photographs [App. 8] as being:

The Arbus photographs convey the anti-humanist message which people of good will in the 1970s are eager to be troubled by, just as they wished, in the 1950s, to be consoled and distracted by a sentimental humanism. There is not as much difference between these messages as one might suppose. The Steichen show was an up and the Arbus show was a down, but either experience serves equally well to rule out a historical understanding of reality.<sup>153</sup>

Surrealist photography intended to impact people to stop war by their artistic expression through distortion of reality; yet it failed to lead them to act. I have argued that there is a gap between images and reception. There is always a room for miscommunication between a photographer's intention and audience's reception. Therefore, a good photograph would mean that it draws upon its communication. Surrealist photography, for audiences, was perhaps too distorted to understand its original meaning.

To sum up, since its invention, photography has been closely connected to war. With technological developments, it has played a more crucial role in war reporting. There were different contexts in which war photography had emerged and developed in the media. Visual representations of war brought a significant impact to our society. It changed not only our way of perceiving war but also our ways of responding to war. In this chapter I discussed two war photography movements; realism and surrealism. From my perspective these two movements were a sort of moral response to war using

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<sup>153</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*. 32-33.

photography—in other words, they can be interpreted as a kind of peacebuilding through photography. However, as I argued, war photography, at least in these two movements, only has had limited success in trying to stop war and to build peace. I argued that both realist and surrealist photographs failed to produce “appropriate distance” between photographs and audiences, it was either too close or too far. Then, how does photography provide such proximity to the audience?

### **1.3 A New Lens for Peacebuilding Photography**

#### **1.3.1 Social Psychological Distance**

In my argument, *proximity* does not mean a geographical distance but social and psychological distance between photographs and audiences. In other words, I am more interested in interactions such as communication, reception and reaction between photography and audiences. In my view, the role of photography in peacebuilding is not just about giving visual information of conflict (what conflict looks like); but photography has actual influence on audiences and society by impressing their perception and emotion, and mobilizing them to act morally for peace and justice. Under such presumption, this thesis continues by investigating different ways that photography can promote peace through the following chapters.

My focus on the social-psychological proximity is rooted in the peacebuilding and conflict transformation approach (Lederach 2003; Dayton and Kriesberg 2009; Lederach and Appleby 2010).<sup>154</sup> This perspective is often referred to as the social-psychology approach to peacebuilding. It is generally seen as ‘an attempt to understand and explain how the thoughts, feeling and behaviour of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of others’ (Allport 1985: 3).<sup>155</sup> It is argued that the origins of the study are connected to war, with particular interest in social

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<sup>154</sup> See the previous chapter (Introduction).

<sup>155</sup> Gordon W. Allport, "The Historical Background of Social Psychology," in *Handbook of Social Psychology*, ed. Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). (Recited from Shelley McKeown, "Social Psychology and Peacebuilding," in *Routledge Handbook of Peacebuilding*, ed. Roger Mac Ginty (London: Routledge, 2013). 117)

influences that war affects individuals and society (Gibson 2011). As Gerald Steinberg describes the social-psychological approach,

Contact theory, dialogue, cross-cultural communications and interactions, as well as forgiveness, reconciliation, and even quasi-legal arguments (or at least legal discourse) are among the main dimensions used in this approach, from which mutual understanding and compromise are expected to flow.<sup>156</sup>

The social-psychologist approach is criticized, as Steinberg argues, that it has been “enthusiastic” without concrete empirical results, except in the case of Northern Ireland.<sup>157</sup> Nevertheless, the approach has much potential to transcend the cycle of violence. In fact, it is almost impossible to calculate empirical result of the approach because it focuses on qualitative changes such as perception and emotion at both individual and cultural levels. Moreover, Steinberg mistakenly diminishes the approach into a level of practice such as workshops, dialogues, peace camps, and other forms of group interactions.<sup>158</sup> These stated programmes are forms of practice as part of the approach, but not the whole. Steinberg’s argument can be better suggested that those programmes are needed for further development of the approach and better results. Otherwise, his argument can be misunderstood as denying the necessity to understand and change the deep roots of conflicts. In this respect, patience is required more than pessimism.

The social-psychology approach seeks a long-term and fundamental change, focusing on relational change between individuals and groups. Harold Saunders, a former senior diplomat in the US State Department, contends that ‘until relationships are changed, deep-rooted human conflicts are not likely to be resolved’.<sup>159</sup> As Shelly McKeown argues, the social psychology approach leads us into better understanding

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<sup>156</sup> Christopher G. Ellison and Daniel A. Powers, "The Contact Hypothesis and Racial Attitudes among Black Americans. (on Race and Ethnicity)," *Social Science Quarterly* 75, no. 2 (1994). (Recited from Gerald Steinberg, "Limits of Social Psychological Approach to Peace," in *Routledge Handbook of Peacebuilding*, ed. Roger Mac Ginty (London: Routledge, 2013). 37.

<sup>157</sup> Steinberg, "Limits of Social Psychological Approach to Peace." 38-40.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid. 38.

<sup>159</sup> Harold H. Saunders, *A Public Peace Process Sustained Dialogue to Transform Racial and Ethnic Conflicts* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1999). 31. (Recited from Steinberg, "Limits of Social Psychological Approach to Peace." 37.)

of what peace actually is and an integral approach to build a culture of peace.<sup>160</sup> The UN defines a culture of peace as:

an integral approach to preventing violence and violent conflicts, and an alternative to the culture of war and violence based on education for peace, the promotion of sustainable economic and social development, respect for human rights, equality between women and men, democratic participation, tolerance, the free flow of information and disarmament.<sup>161</sup>

For building peace, as social psychologists argue, we need a holistic approach. The contribution of the social-psychology approach is to help us focus on relational aspects of conflict as the fundamental causes and effects in conflict. McKeown argues,

Vitality, social psychologists will continue to work on the theoretical frameworks which are important to understand how and why conflict occurs, which can then be used to devise the most effective peacebuilding strategies.<sup>162</sup>

My argument is that the social psychologist approach can be applied to photography for building peace. While the realism and surrealism photography failed to provide an appropriate distance, by simply focusing on physical violence or distorted reality, social psychologists and practitioners focus on different relationships between individuals and groups.

One keyword that this chapter would pursue consistently is “distance” between people and societies. In *Moral Imagination* (2005), Lederach uses the metaphor of voice to explain the authenticity of change. For him, authenticity of social change is not based on words and images used by national leaders but ‘shared perception about the quality and nature of the public sphere.’<sup>163</sup> How often the media have been a tool that delivers words and images of national leaders! In other words, it is essentially rooted in real-life relationships at the level ‘where people have the

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<sup>160</sup> McKeown, "Social Psychology and Peacebuilding." 128.

<sup>161</sup> United Nations General Assembly, "UN Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace a/53/243," (1999).

<sup>162</sup> McKeown, "Social Psychology and Peacebuilding." 128.

<sup>163</sup> John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). 56.



greatest access' and 'where they are most directly affected: in their respective community.'<sup>164</sup> Thus this proximity, space and distance of human society, is the key to examine the authenticity of social change.

Lederach's metaphor *Distance for Meaningful Conversation* therefore suggests mutuality, understanding, and accessibility. He continues,

Conversation has the unique quality of providing a meaningful space of participation and interchange. ... The proxemics of conversation and voice is one of direct access and contact. In the many direct interactions I have had with people in settings of deep conflict, I consistently hear that authenticity finds its births in this sense of proximity. We might call this the social distance of direct conversation, the actual physical space that permits people to feel they are participants in, not just observes and recipients of, the process.<sup>165</sup>

In thinking of this research, my intention is to ask whether photojournalism provides such proximity to keep *distance for meaningful conversation* between people and societies. How can photographic images engage in real-life relationships? The concept of *social distance of direct conversation* is easily accepted in an interpersonal level. Then, I want to expand the theory of *social distance of direct conversation* from interpersonal level into societal level. In the societal levels between two groups or nations, the actual physical space to meet would be impossible. Instead, the media, including photography, can be an actual space to communicate between different groups and societies.

### 1.3.2 A Lens for a Holistic Vision

Secondly, the process of peacebuilding is similar to the photographic process. It consists of a series of stages and each stage affects its outcome.

Reflected light is gathered by a static, monocular lens of particular construction, set a particular distance from the objects in its field of view. [...] The projected image of these objects is focused, cropped and distorted by the flat, rectangular plate of the camera ...<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*. 56-57.

<sup>166</sup> Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories*. 3.

In the process, *setting a particular distance* from the objects is the first step of photography. Perhaps, a photographic outcome would be already predicted from the first step because the distance refers to a photographer's view such as one's perception of the object and intention to express through the image. A photographer chooses either a long, medium, or close-up shot of the object. Each shot provides a different proximity from the object to the audience.

Before taking a photograph, a photographer chooses a lens for its own purpose among standard lens, macro lens, telephoto lens, and wide-angle lens. Each of them gives different visual information of a conflict situation. Earlier I discussed the two war photography movements, *realism* and *surrealism*. I argued that both movements failed to provide appropriate proximity to the audience because the distance was either too close or too far. Which lens is then most suitable to visualize war and conflict?

Lenses as a metaphor are significantly used in peacebuilding and conflict transformation which seems relevant to our discussion. John Paul Lederach uses the lenses metaphor to explain the implications of conflict transformation (Lederach 2003).<sup>167</sup> Lederach argues that conflict transformation is not a set of specific techniques; but it is 'a way of looking as well as seeing' and 'a set of lenses through which we view social conflict'.<sup>168</sup> He uses an analogy of "progressive lenses" as a model of peacebuilding. three types of lenses such as distance, mid-range, and micro lens, he highlights that we need to use all the lenses in a single frame to see a whole picture.

My three lenses are held together in a single frame. Each lens is different, but each must be in relationship with the others if the various dimensions of reality are to be held together as a whole. I need each lens to see a particular portion of reality, and I need them to be in relationship to see the whole. This is the usefulness of finding lenses that help us address specific aspects of conflicts, while at the same time providing a means to envision the whole picture.<sup>169</sup>

The whole picture is like a map that enables us to understand the complexity of conflict.

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<sup>167</sup> John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2003).

<sup>168</sup> Ibid. 9.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid. 10.

Also, each lens is necessary to see conflict at three levels: immediate situation, underlying pattern and context, and a conceptual framework. My contention is that this idea of progressive lenses provides a useful criteria of peacebuilding photography. To build peace, a holistic view is required like progressive lenses. The question we can ask of peacebuilding photography is whether photography provides all three dimensions: content, context, and conceptual framework.

First, as Lederach argues, we need to see the immediate situation of a conflict.<sup>170</sup> This means a photograph(s) plays a role of informing through visual content of conflict. Visual representation of conflict is the basic role of photography that shows how violent and tragic war is. This is the conventional role that war photography functions in war reporting. The role of photography should not remain at the level of simply portraying the surface of war; but rather, it should help its audience see beyond an immediate situation—*context* and conceptual *framework*.

Understanding of context is crucial for peacebuilding. I argue that this is the role of photography for peacebuilding. Photography should be able to focus on deeper levels of conflict not just portraying the surface of war. It cannot be emphasized enough that a photograph is ambiguous and its reception is also ambiguous. Some photographs can be simply and directly read and interpreted by its content of the image, but some cannot be fully interpreted without information of a context. For this indexical characteristic, a photograph can be misleading viewers from its original meaning.

In this way, the second criterion of peacebuilding photography is to ask whether it helps viewers understand contextual information of conflict. Lederach suggests that we need to see ‘beyond the presenting problems toward the deeper patterns of relationship, including the context in which the conflict finds expression’.<sup>171</sup> It is important to highlight that Lederach focuses on patterns of relationship between persons and groups. Relationship is fundamental in conflict transformation which not only needs to deal with the roots of conflict but needs a key

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid. 10-11.

to promote change.

The last point of the conflict transformation is that we need a conceptual *framework* that ‘holds these perspectives together, one that permits us to connect the presenting problems with the deeper relational patterns’.<sup>172</sup> This is the lens that allows us to see through the essence of conflict in the midst of the complexity. In my view, a cultural approach is suitable to investigate a conceptual framework that interacts within people and society. As culture is socially constructed and consists of multiple levels of relationships, cultural studies and religious studies are useful to analyze not only deeper patterns of relationships in society (Berger 1966).<sup>173</sup> Particularly, it is helpful to understand complex cultural concepts such as identity, nationality, memory, and social system.

A photograph(s) can be used to find a meaning system of society since photographs are cultural symbols that are socially constructed and reconstructed. Photographs as a symbol can represent the conceptual framework that penetrates the essence of conflict. In this way, a photograph can play a symbolic role that presents a conceptual framework and represents deeper patterns of relationship in conflict.

## **1.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have reconsidered war photography and its impact from a peacebuilding perspective in order to see the relationship between photography and peace/conflict. I particularly chose two war photography movements, realism and surrealism, from the 1850s to the 1950s. As made clear earlier, my contention is that the war photography movements can be understood as social moral responses to war using photographs.

In realist photography, with the technical development of the camera, photojournalists focused on how to portray tragic war realistically. They tried to portray the horrific tragedy of war as realistically as possible. By doing so, they believed they could stop war—more precisely, they could make people stop war. As

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid. 11.

<sup>173</sup> Peter L. Berger, *The Social Construction of Reality : A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, ed. Thomas Luckmann, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966).

seen in the case of Friedrich's *War against War*, however, realistic visualization of war and violence had a temporal impact but the shock did not last long. Rather, there were concerns about being familiarized and removed from the reality. The realistic description of war focused on the surface of war such as physical violence so that failed to offer an appropriate distance to the audience. That is, the distance between photography and audiences was too close.

On the other hand, surrealist photography appeared along with Breton's *Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924). Surrealism was closely connected to an anti-war movement that criticized the overcredulity of human reason and emphasized a realm of human unconsciousness. Photography was popularly used to express their thoughts and beliefs by producing images that distorted reality. Although their intentions would be diverse, I argue, their ways of visualizing war appear too difficult to read and to interpret. I also argue that their strategy such as distortion or fantasy could make viewers remote from reality. That is, it also failed to provide an appropriate distance.

Then how can we develop a realistic proximity between photography and the audience? To find a way, I borrow a social psychologist approach to peacebuilding which focuses on different relationships between individuals and groups. Central to this relational aspect, I argue that photography can provide a space for meaningful conversation. For this, as dialogue is key to interaction between people and groups, photography in the media can be a tool of understanding of conflict. It would change our way of perception, emotion, and even action in relation to conflicts. Moreover, I drew upon Lederach's progressive lenses metaphor and suggested that conflict transformation theory can be a criteria of peacebuilding photography. It stresses a holistic lens to see through a conflict situation using all lenses for different distances. To understand conflict well, we need to see content, context, and conceptual framework in a single frame. Particularly, I argue that relationship is the essence of conflict and sometimes becomes a key of change.

In the following chapters, I will explore specific cases that used photography as a tool of peacebuilding. I will discuss five different uses of photography for building peace in ways of *revealing* truth, *representing* the pain of victims, *resisting* violence, *remembering* a painful past, and *restoring* justice and reconciliation.

## CHAPTER 2. REVEALING TRUTH AND WITNESSING VIOLENCE



Figure 1. “Even an Army medic joins the brutal suppression, beating an unresisting student.” 19<sup>th</sup> May 1980 / Photo by Na Kyung-taek

In this photograph [Fig. 1] two men are featured in the centre, a soldier and a civilian, and a military vehicle on the bottom. The vehicle is a so-called “Pepper Fog Boxcar” which was often used to suppress protests. The uniform of the man on the right provides a clue to the context. It is strange because the man who is beating the other man is not a police officer but a soldier. The soldier is beating a man with his club on the street. The soldier’s uniform and helmet show that he was trained by a special force. The other man appears to be a young man, possibly a college student. The photo does not explain why the soldier is beating the man, nor whether he was involved in the protest. Instead, it shows the student is already bleeding with his face down apparently not resisting the soldier’s blows. Who are they? Why is the soldier beating the man who is unarmed and injured? What is happening during the time that this photographic image was captured?

The documentary photography style indicates that it was taken for a journalistic purpose. It shows a high quality of photojournalism. This black-and-white image

makes it a powerful image of a past event; but it does not provide the exact period apart from checking the caption. The quality of the photograph is quite high. The framing is well balanced, and the focus is also very clear and accurate, indicating that it was likely taken by a professional photographer or photojournalist.

Moreover, the angle of the photograph shows that it was taken from above, indicating that the photographer had access to a nearby building in order to capture such images. It is commonly shown that most photographs during this period were taken from a similar angle, from the top and are middle-or-long-range shots. This enabled the photographer to hide from view while recording the events firsthand. Photographs from this angle allow audiences to feel that they are watching the actual moment of the event. It gives an impression that it was documented without intervention, which makes the audience feel as if they are also *observing* it—or, put differently, through the camera lens, the photographer and the audiences are *witnessing* a moment of truth.

I chose Na Kyung-taek's photograph [Fig. 1] because it captures not only the moment of violence but also represents the essence of the event through the photographer's eyes. The photograph is not only documenting an event but also revealing truth related to the event. My contention is that Na Kyung-taek did not simply document an event, through photographs, but rather played a testimonial role of bearing witness to violence of the martial law army to the protesters who were ordinary citizens. He revealed truth by capturing the “decisive moment” on the right time and place.

The French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908-2004) published his photobook *Images à la Sauvette* (images on the runs) in France in 1952—the title of the English edition was *The Decisive Moment*.<sup>174</sup> In the introduction to this volume, Cartier-Bresson briefly describes his ideas of photography. He highlights the peculiarity of photography related to the momentariness.

To me, photography is the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a

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<sup>174</sup> See Henri Cartier-Bresson, *The Decisive Moment*, (Göttingen: Steidl, 2014). Also see Magnum Photos at <https://pro.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&ALID=2TYRYD1D518O> (Accessed 27 October 2017).

second, of the significance of an event as well as of a precise organization of forms which give that event its proper expression.<sup>175</sup>

The decisive moment is ‘commonly interpreted by photojournalists simply as the capture of a dramatic climax.’<sup>176</sup> It appears as ‘an instant of equilibrium perceived by the photographer through the camera’s viewfinder.’<sup>177</sup> For Cartier-Bresson, a photographer’s practice is a social interaction between a photographer’s artistic sense and a social reality. ‘In such an instant, compositional resolution is seen to represent the psychic dimension of underlying social and political realities’.<sup>178</sup> In other words, the decisive moment is closely connected to a socio-political context because a photographer’s intuition and sensibility is embedded in one’s social context. Cartier-Bresson gave an insight to our discussion on a photographer’s role in conflict reporting: a photographer’s role is closely connected to one’s perspective on the context.

What was the context when Na Kyung-taek took the photograph? And in that given situation how was he involved in an act of visual truth-telling? What was the role of a photographer for revealing truth? In this chapter, I consider the ways in which photography has been used to bear witness to violence in Gwangju in May 1980. More precisely, I wonder to what extent photography reveals truth through the visual representation of conflict. In this respect, I focus on the role of photojournalists as *bearing witness* to violence through one’s embedded experience to an event in proximity.

In what follows, I first look at the social and political context of the May 18 Gwangju Democratic Uprising; then, I will discuss the role of photojournalists in the conflict situation by investigating different concepts of witness such as media witness and bearing witness.

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid. See the Introduction (1-14).

<sup>176</sup> See on “decisive moment” in Daniel Chandler, *A Dictionary of Media and Communication*, ed. Rod Munday, 2nd ed., Media and Communication (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>177</sup> See on “decisive moment” in Robin Lenman, *The Oxford Companion to the Photograph*, Companion to the Photograph (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.



## 2.1 Introduction to the May 18 Democratic Uprising

### 2.1.1 Social and Political Context

The May 18 Democratic Uprising (hereafter “May 18<sup>th</sup>”) occurred over a 10-day period, from 18 May to 27 May 1980 in the city of Gwangju, a southwestern region of South Korea. During ten days, *gyeomgun* (the martial law army) began a violent campaign against a group of peaceful protesters asking for the democratization of Korea. This event was not only a tragic massacre that resulted in many victims (154 killed, 74 missing, and 4,141 wounded, including those who subsequently died), but also a democratic uprising fighting against the suppression of the military regime.<sup>179</sup>

May 18<sup>th</sup> was a national tragedy—although it happened in the Gwangju area, since it was part of the broad historical context, it affected Korean society on a national level, not only the Gwangju area.<sup>180</sup> Namely, it left an indelible scar as a moment of collective violence and trauma in Korean history. Thus, seeking truth of May 18<sup>th</sup> was fundamentally related to seeking justice and peace in the Korean context.

May 18<sup>th</sup> is known by different names, such as the Gwangju Riot, Gwangju Incident, Gwangju Democratization Movement, Gwangju Uprising, and Gwangju Massacre.<sup>181</sup> Kang Man-gil, a historian and sociologist, understands the changes of the name as the progress of historical interpretation of the event in Korean history (Kang 1990).<sup>182</sup> These terms are utilized by different groups, each with their own perspectives of the event. As time advances, the usage of each term has been changed. For example, research based on data analysis shows that the usage of the term “Gwangju incident” in the Korean news media was dramatically reduced after the end of Chun Doo-hwan’s regime in 1987; instead it is replaced with Gwangju “uprising”

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<sup>179</sup> The May 18 Foundation, *The May 18th Gwangju Demoractic Uprising*. (Gwangju, South Korea: The May 18<sup>th</sup> History Compilation Committee of Gwangju City, 2007). 61.

<sup>180</sup> Jeong Sang-yong et al., *Gwangju Minjung Hangjaeng: Documentary 1980* [Gwangju Minjung Uprising: Documentary 1980] (Seoul: Dolbegae, 1990). Part III.

<sup>181</sup> I prefer to use the term the “Gwangju Uprising” through the whole thesis, except in this chapter, because I do not want to inform my evaluation about the event particularly related to the question “what is truth?”. Thus, in this chapter, I use the term “May 18<sup>th</sup>” for the event which sounds relevantly neutral.

<sup>182</sup> Kang Man-gil, *Tongil Undong Sideaewi Yeoksa Insik* [Historical Consciousness in an Age of Reunification Movement] (Paju, South Korea: Seohae Munjip, 2008). 40-56.

and the May 18 began to be considered as a “democratic movement”.<sup>183</sup> These changes have been made through the process of historical reconstruction.<sup>184</sup>

The May 18 is not a single event separated from modern Korean history. It should be understood in the broad understanding of the Korean context. In the longer term, Korean society had been undergoing a turbulent period such as the Japanese occupation (1910-1945), the Korean War (1950), and the division (1950-present). Kim Dong-choon who served as a standing member of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee in Korea (2005-2010) has argued that there were two important periods of national transition in Korea.<sup>185</sup> The first period was the postcolonial period” (1945-1950) and the second was the “the interim period of political freedom and another failed attempt to achieve justice” (19 April-15 May 1961). Kim argues that Korean society failed to seek justice during these significant moments, which aggravated the situation which resulted in military regimes ruling the country.<sup>186</sup>

In the shorter term, the May 18 occurred in a context imbued with violence under the military dictatorship in Korea. The first period of the military regime began with the “5.16 Coup” in 1961 led by General Park Chung-hee, who trained at the Japanese military academy. Park Chung-hee remained in office from 1961 until he was assassinated by Kim Jae-kyu on 26 October 1979. Soon after, the political situation seemed to be unstable, but the political vacuum did not last long. Only a few months later, on 12 December 1979, General Chun Doo-hwan, a commander of the security command of the army carried the so-called “12.12 coup”, which is directly related to

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<sup>183</sup> The result was created by the SBS News Data Journalism Team “Mabujakchim” using through the keyword analysis of the usage of different names of the May 18 Democratic Uprising. See Park Won-kyung, “From The “Gwangju Incident” Through “Gwangju Uprising” To Gwangju Democratic Movement”, and Next?,” *SBS News* 16 May 2016.

[http://news.sbs.co.kr/news/endPage.do?news\\_id=N1003576165&plink=SEARCH&cooper=SBSNEWSSEARCH](http://news.sbs.co.kr/news/endPage.do?news_id=N1003576165&plink=SEARCH&cooper=SBSNEWSSEARCH) (Accessed 27 October 2017).

<sup>184</sup> I will discuss the process of reconstruction of the painful past in the fifth chapter of this thesis in relation to the concept of memory and trauma.

<sup>185</sup> Kim Dong-choon is a sociologist and professor at the Sung-kong-hoe University in Seoul, South Korea. See Dong-choon Kim, “The Long Road toward Truth and Reconciliation,” *Critical Asian Studies* 42, no. 4 (2010). Also see the sixth chapter on “Restoring Justice and Peace” of this thesis.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid. 533-536. The military regimes (1961-1987) includes the Park Chung-hee regimes (1961-1979) and the Chun Doo-hwan regimes (1979-1987), and it was ended by the June Democratic Uprising in 1987.

the background of the May 18. He proclaimed martial law and seized power rapidly, purging the opposition forces.

In response to the 12.12 coup, voices of censure by opponents such as politicians, activists and students were growing across the nation. A series of democratic movements happened in universities at a national level.<sup>187</sup> As part of the movements, beginning on 14 May 1980, several demonstrations were led by professors and university students in the Gwangju area. On 15 May, the *minjok minjuhwa seonghoe* (the Assembly for National Democratization) was an example of peaceful protest. One of the photographs capturing the protest describes a large number of people marching following the lead group who held a giant *Taegeukgi* (national flag), and professors among them were wearing formal suits which demonstrated their determined attitude and order.

### 2.1.2 What Happened in the May of Gwangju

On 18 May 1980, around 200 student protesters gathered at the main gate of Chonnam National University. They planned to march through Geumnam Street. It seemed calm, although there was tension between the protesters and police. However, the situation suddenly became serious as the troopers arrived—it was about 4:40 pm. In *Gwangju Diary: Beyond Death, Beyond the Darkness of the Age* (1999), Lee Jai-eui who witnessed the brutal massacre described the moment as below:

At 4:40 p.m., the police were released. Soon after, the troops began to attack the demonstrations. In cooperation with the police, they broke up the crowds and ran down individual students, beating them to the ground. [...] A cluster of troops attacked each student individually. They would crack open his head, stomp on his back, and kick him in the face. When the soldiers were done, he looked like a pile of clothes drenched in meat sauce. During the uprising, the rebels were killed in different ways; at first, most were beaten to death. Later the troops used bayonets against the rebels. As the insurgency peaked, the military used their guns. [...] When their bloodied victims lost consciousness, the paratroopers grabbed them by their necks and dragged the bodies to the police vans. The demonstrators were casually tossed in on top of one another, like dead animals. The remaining crowd scattered. [...] The people on the street were shocked. The troops kept piling the students, some kicking and screaming, most

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<sup>187</sup> Lee Jai-eui, Seol Kap-Su, and Nick Mamatas, *Kwangju Diary: Beyond Death, Beyond the Darkness of the Age* (Los Angeles, CA: UCLA, 1999). 37-38. This is the English edition of the book that was originally published in Korean in 1985 and the second edition in 2017.

barely able to move, into the trucks. Young or old men or women, it didn't matter. The soldiers filled their trucks and arbitrarily kicked and swung their batons at the mass of bodies. The paratroopers entered Kwangju to carry out five operations. The military brass's code name for the deployment was Fascinating Vacations.<sup>188</sup>

Coming out of the “pepper-fog” boxcar, the troops began to beat people indiscriminately whether they were protesters or citizens, men and women, and even older people and children. The citizens of Gwangju were extremely frightened by this excessive use of military force—which created not only fear but also injury and death. It was not only exceptional that the troopers were sent to the place of democratic protest; but also their use of excessive force to control the protest which escalated the violence further. More importantly, without any notice, the troops committed a brutal operation on innocent citizens, regardless whether they were protestors or not, only because they were there.

On the second day, 19 May 1980, the situation rapidly escalated. Unlike the day before, not only students but thousands of citizens participated in the protest.<sup>189</sup> It was a reaction against the violent suppression. As more people gathered on Geumnam Street, more paratroopers were sent. Strikingly, from that day, paratroopers started to use guns and bayonets—which were meant to combat enemies of the Korean state, not her own people.<sup>190</sup> What purpose motivated them to commit such an atrocity? Was it politically motivated? Choi Jung-woon argues that it was a strategy of the “fear politics” intended by General Chun Doo-hwan and his supporters.<sup>191</sup> In other words, the ultimate aim of the brutal operation “Fascinating Vacation” was to terrify people, not only the citizens of Gwangju but all people of South Korea.

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid. 47-8.

<sup>189</sup> Yong-taek Kim, *May 18, Kwangju: The Kwangju Uprising, Causes and Development Process* (Seoul: Korea: History Space, 2010). 287. The number of protestors on 19th May is estimated differently by the police and the citizen groups. According to a military record, about 3,000 to 4,000 protestors gathered at 11 am on 19th May, 1980 on the Geumnam-ro.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Choi Jung-woon is a professor of political science at the Seoul National University. See Choi Jung-woon, *The Gwangju Uprising: The Pivotal Democratic Movement That Changed the History of Modern Korea* (Paramus, NJ: Homa & Sekey Books, 2006). 103-113.

### 2.1.3 Why Truth Matters

The name of “Gwangju” (광주, 光州) means the “province of light”. After May 18<sup>th</sup>, the city lost light and only bloody darkness was left. Why did it have to happen in Gwangju? Regarding the matter of “why Gwangju?”, it is largely agreed that General Chun Doo-hwan abused regionalism (Shin & Hwang 2003; Choi 2005). In Korean politics, “regionalism” has been particularly important since ‘the Honam or Cholla region (with Gwangju as its center) has been the home of much of the political opposition in the post-1948 period’.<sup>192</sup> For instance, Rhee Syng-man’s Liberal Party had its origins in the region; and Kim Dae-jung, the symbolic opposition leader during the Park Jung-hee regime, was also from the same region. Within the conflict composition, ‘the [Honam] region suffered from severe discrimination in virtually all areas of social, political, and economical life’.<sup>193</sup> William Gleysteen Jr., the U.S. ambassador to Korea at the time of the Gwangju Uprising, pointed out the first cause of the uprising as below:

[It was] the military decision to arrest Kim Dae-jung in the harsh crackdown of May 17 and to accuse him of causing the student turmoil. ... [Moreover] historic resentments in the Cholla region intensified the stubborn behavior of the protesting students. Having their national hero singled out by the military as the troublemaker in Seoul tapped into a deep pool of resentment in Cholla, where people felt they had been treated as second-class citizens if not outcasts by the rival region of Kyongsang and the leadership in Seoul.<sup>194</sup>

Within the political context, the citizens of Gwangju became a scapegoat of the tragedy. They were victimized by political ideology. In this respect, the truth we need to focus among many (un)truths should be the reality that a number of innocent people were killed and injured by the political violence.<sup>195</sup> Therefore, the fundamental truth that

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<sup>192</sup> Shin Gi-wook and Hwang Kyung-moon, *Contentious Kwangju : The May 18 Uprising in Korea's Past and Present* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003). xx.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid. For example, “As late as 1978, GNP per capita in Kwangju was only 75 percent of the national average, and agriculture constituted 38 percent of GNP in the South Cholla province (compared to only 18 percent for the nation as a whole).”

<sup>194</sup> William H. Gleysteen Jr., "A Former U.S. Official's Perspective on the Kwangju Uprising," in *Luncheon Address, USC-UCLA Conference on Kwangju* (Los Angeles, CA: 21 April, 2000).

<sup>195</sup> Shin Gi-wook and Hwang Kyung-moon, *Contentious Kwangju : The May 18 Uprising in Korea's*

penetrates May 18<sup>th</sup> is the “massacre”, the killing of innocent citizens rather than “democratic movement”.

Kim Young-taek, a journalist and historian who lived during the period, emphasizes that it should be named the “Gwangju Massacre” rather than Gwangju Uprising or other name because he believes that the essence of this tragic history is “political violence”.<sup>196</sup> Kim’s argument has particular value in that he himself is one of the victims, who is also advocating for the victims. Many of those who were injured still suffer both physically and psychologically. Thus, it is still most important to remember those victimized by the political violence in the discussion of the Gwangju Uprising today.

It seems obvious that May 18<sup>th</sup> was a brutal massacre by military forces that resulted in thousands of victims. Nevertheless, there were different attempts to distort May 18<sup>th</sup> as a riot or rebellion against the government.<sup>197</sup> The Chun regime kept trying to hide and distort the truth. Controlling the media, they publicized that the protesters were armed and managed by Communists. Also, they used selected photographs depicting the citizen militia driving military vehicles and holding guns. The use of photography by the military regime shows how photographs captured during the same period were used and interpreted differently.<sup>198</sup>

There are still different arguments and rumors regarding the Gwangju Massacre. However, the May 18 was a reaction against use of excessive force by the

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*Past and Present*. xvii. “On June 2, the Marshall Law Command announced that 170 were dead (144 civilians, 22 soldiers, and 4 policemen) and 380 wounded (127 civilians, 109 soldiers, and 144 policemen). Yet this official figure omits those missing or dead after May 27 as a result of wounds suffered during the military violence. Even today, two decades after the uprising, it is not certain exactly how many were killed. The best estimates available today suggest about five hundred civilians dead and over three thousand injured.”

<sup>196</sup> Kim Young-taek, *May 18, Gwangju: Gwangju Minjung Uprising, Cause and Development* (Seoul: Yeoksagonggan, 2010).

<sup>197</sup> Regarding the historical distortion of the May 18, see Oh Seung-yong, Han Seon, and Yu Gyeong-nam, *5.18 Owegok-Eui Giwon-Gwa Jinsil* [5.18 Gwangju Democratic Movement: Distortions and Truth] (Gwangju, South Korea: May 18 Memorial Foundation, 2012). Jeong Geun-sik, “Korean Modern History: Distortion and Truth in May 18 Gwangju Uprising,” *Critical Review of History* (1995).

<sup>198</sup> Song Jeong-min, “Research on Reality Construction of News: Central to Reports of May 18 in the Korean News Media” (Sogang University, 1994).

government. More precisely, it was not a riot but a political massacre wrought for political purposes (Choi 1999).<sup>199</sup> Therefore, seeking truth about the May 18 is critical to seeking justice and peace in the context. It is directly connected to the fundamental questions such as “why Gwangju?” and “Who is responsible?”

Within the context, photography plays a vital role in witnessing the truth of the brutal history. Among numerous images of the event, the value of Na Kyung-taek’s photograph [Fig. 1] is that it reveals the symbolic moment of truth regarding May 18 in Gwangju—which was the evidence of the “Gwangju Massacre” and the “victims”. Without admitting/remembering the truth, any description of the event is ultimately meaningless. In this way, this photograph plays its most significant role in revealing the truth of the Gwangju Massacre.

The photograph evokes a moral sense and takes us into a deeper question: Why did the troops, including an army medic, participate in such a brutal suppression? Even the medic in the photograph was beating a student who was neither armed nor resisting. For myself, the medic beating the citizen represents the cruelty of the martial law army who were supposed to protect the citizens; and the student who was beaten represents an innocent citizen who simply wanted a democratic Korea.

It is fair to ask how we might establish what is truth among the numerous circulated (un)truths and to what extent the photograph represents the “decisive moment” witnessing the truth of the Gwangju Uprising. To what extent was the role of photojournalists essential during the event in revealing truth? My focus is the way in which a photojournalist contributes to the role of media witness to violent conflict and to reveal truth among my possible interpretations of the event. To do this, it would be helpful to review concepts of witness and media witness.

## **2.2 Concepts of Witnessing**

Witnessing is an intriguing and intricate concept. John Durham Peters (2001) provides a useful analysis of the term “witness”. Peters distinguishes the noun *witness* into three categories—law, theology, and atrocity.

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<sup>199</sup> Choi Jung-Woon, *The Social Sciences On "May"* (Seoul: May Spring; Pulbit, 2012; 1999).

### 2.2.1 Legal Concept of Witness to Truth

In law, Peters argues that the notion of the witness is ‘ancient and part of most known legal system’. The role of a witness is to provide ‘a privileged source of information for judicial decisions’.<sup>200</sup> Witnessing is fundamentally connected to the matter of truth and justice. Witnessing is distinguished from an act of looking or seeing. We do not use the term “witnessing” when we see something ordinary. We only use the term witnessing when we encounter an event which is morally important. To be a witness means to be given a special position and authority related to truth-telling because he was there and saw what happened in person. Based on what the witness observed, he or she plays a pivotal role of revealing truth.

### 2.2.2 Theological Concepts of Witness

The theological concept of witness was developed in early Christianity, particularly related to the concept of “martyr”.<sup>201</sup> Although these terms were found in other religious traditions, the Christian concept of witness is uniquely important to the formation of its identity and practice (McClendon 2000; Mitchell 2012).<sup>202</sup> The term *martyr* originally meant simply *witness*, without having the notion that “one who suffers”. The notion of a martyr who suffers for one’s religious conviction was made and imprinted by early Christians who followed Christ. They were willing to bear the cost of any threat or danger to witness to their faith in God. In this way, the term *martyr* is a derivate of *witness* which implies a fundamental identity of Christianity.<sup>203</sup>

Jolyon Mitchell (2012) maintains that Jesus was described as the exemplar of martyrdom for early Christians. Mitchell argues that a noun *witness* and a verb *bearing witness* are repeatedly found in the New Testament such as John, Acts, and Revelation.

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<sup>200</sup> John Durham Peters, "Witnessing," *Media, Culture & Society* 23, no. 6 (2001). 708.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid. 707.

<sup>202</sup> See James Wm McClendon, *Witness* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon; 2000); Jolyon P. Mitchell, *Martyrdom: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>203</sup> McClendon, *Witness*. 348.



He particularly takes his focus on the book of Revelation:

Jesus is described not only as “Christ” but also as “the faithful witness” (Revelation 1:5). Even though this is rarely translated as “faithful martyr”, many scholars interpret this to mean that Jesus is viewed here as the “proto-” or even “founding martyr”, who is then described as the “firstborn from the dead”. From this point of view, Jesus is portrayed as both the pioneering martyr and the “first” of many to overcome death.<sup>204</sup>

It is perhaps confusing for contemporary readers that Jesus is portrayed as the proto-martyr. In our contemporary news media, Mitchell argues, ‘martyrdom is now commonly connected with a death that also results in the killing of others’—which is called “predatory martyrdom”.<sup>205</sup> There have been many examples caused by religious conflict, terrorism, and suicide bombs all over the world. However, he also maintains that there are “peaceful martyrdoms”, providing different origins, forms, and uses of martyrdom in history.<sup>206</sup> Another example is Stephen, the first martyr of the church (Acts 7:54-8:1). It is noteworthy that Stephen’s last words are ‘reminiscent of Jesus’ words of forgiveness on the cross in the Gospel of Luke,<sup>207</sup> because the idea of Christian martyrdom is not in death or killing but forgiveness and sacrificial love. That is, martyrdom is a way of witnessing to God’s love by the disciples who follow Christ.

In his book *Witness* (2000), James McClendon considers that witness is the essence of Christianity which forms Christian identity and teaches how to live in society. A Christian is called as a witness to God who follows Christ through their way of life such as forgiveness and sacrificial love. Early Christians were willing to risk any threat, danger, and even death to bear witness to the Gospel. Martyrdom is not the *goal* of witness but rather a *costly* glory as part of a journey of faith to follow Jesus.<sup>208</sup>

It [sacrificial martyrdom] meant a living witness—going, telling, persuading, baptizing, teaching—not only a dying one. The witness of martyrdom was perhaps the first, but certainly not the only, expression of

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<sup>204</sup> Mitchell, *Martyrdom : A Very Short Introduction*. 23.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid. 1.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid. 4.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid. 1-2; 24. Mitchell shows the ambivalence of martyrdom in different ways, by distinguishing predatory and peaceful, military and non-violent, and active and passive martyrdoms.

<sup>208</sup> McClendon, *Witness*. 347-348.

McClendon draws upon the Anabaptist tradition, which emphasizes discipleship, mission, baptism and witness.<sup>210</sup> He sees that witness as a distinctive pattern of life in following Christ. A witness story is evidence of their faith. Witness, including martyrdom, is a medium of mission that reveals truth to the world. 'Such a view of mission and witness', he argues, 'entailed a people with a goal or end, and this in turn grew from a (true) story.'<sup>211</sup>

Witness as narrative gives an insight to our discussion, the role of photography for revealing truth. In a pluralist society where a universal truth is not welcomed, a story can be a tool for revealing a meaning or truth that the story connotes. A witness is a story rather than a doctrine. A witness has power that reveals truth when the story is authentic. Photography is a form of image that captures a moment of an event and it has power to reveal truth of a whole event when it has authenticity. My contention is the authentic witness draws upon a photojournalist through one's embedded experience in conflict.

### 2.2.3 Witness as Testimonial

The last notion of witness indicates a survivor's testimony from a violent conflict. This term focuses on horrific tragedies during the Second World War such as the Holocaust and concentration camps.<sup>212</sup> The testimonies of survivors from the concentration camps played a crucial role in revealing the enormous truth. Moreover, their stories became a prophetic voice of fighting against violence, particularly through the form of literature by authors such as Paul Levi and Ellie Wiesel.<sup>213</sup> In his volume *If This is a*

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid. 348.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid. 345-347; 349. McClendon divides Christianity into three groups such as Roman Catholics, Reformed Protestants and Radical Reformers who are Baptist and Anabaptist. He distinguishes the Anabaptist tradition from Roman Catholics and Reformed Protestants with four aspects: disciple's role, great commission as mission, practice of baptism tied to evangelism, and the likelihood of suffering as witness.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid. 350

<sup>212</sup> Peters, "Witnessing."

<sup>213</sup> See Primo Levi, S. J. Woolf, and Paul Bailey, *If This Is a Man; and the Truce* (London:

*Man* (1958), Primo Levi describes the testimonial role of survivors:

[...] even in this place one can survive, and therefore one must want to survive, to tell the story, to bear witness; and that to survive we must force ourselves to save at least the skeleton, the scaffolding, the form of civilization. We are slaves, deprived of every right, exposed to every insult, condemned to certain death, but we still possess one power, and we must defend it with all our strength for it is the last — the power to refuse our consent.<sup>214</sup>

In this fashion, the survival from atrocity is not weak but strong; more powerful than any other witness to the violence and suffering in the Holocaust. This is because they were there and had been through the horrible time.

The role of testimonial narratives was significant in the Korean context as well. In relation to the May 18, particularly, the role of poems and novels were and are distinct, which are called the “May Literature”.<sup>215</sup> Here are selected volumes: *Spring Days* (Lim Chul-woo 1987-1998), *Their Dawn* (Moon Sun-tae 2000), *A Flag* (Hong Hee-dam 2003), *Legato* (Kwon Yeo-sun 2012), *Where Does the Song Come From* (Gong Seon-ok 2013), and *Human Acts* (Han Gang 2014; 2016).<sup>216</sup>

Testimonial literature is unique as a genre since it aims to testify what authors witnessed. In his analysis of Holocaust literature, James Young (1988) demonstrates witnessing as critical in ways and style of the genre.

Holocaust writers and critics have assumed that the more realistic a representation, the more adequate it becomes as testimonial evidence of outrageous event. And as witness became the aim of this writing, “documentary realism” has become the style by which to persuade readers of a work’s testamentary character. For survivor’s witness to be credible, it

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Abacus/Sphere, 1987). Elie Wiesel, *Night*, (New York,: Hill and Wang, 1960); *From the Kingdom of Memory: Reminiscences* (New York: Summit Books, 1990).

<sup>214</sup> Levi, Woolf, and Bailey, *If This Is a Man; and the Truce*. 47.

<sup>215</sup> In May 2017, for instance, a Korean poet Cho Jin-tae presented his article “the May Literature as a Unique Korean Literature” at the May Literature Forum at the 5.18 Archives in Gwangju. <http://www.news-paper.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=12159> (Accessed 29 October 2017)

<sup>216</sup> Lim Chul-woo, “Bomnal,” (Seoul: Munhakgwa Jiseongsa, 1987-1998); Moon Sun-tae, *Geudeuleui Saebyeok* [Their Dawn] (Seoul: Hangilsa, 2000); Hong Hee-dam, “Gitbal,” (Paju, South Korea: Changbi, 2003); Kwon Yeo-sun, *Legato* (Paju, South Korea: Changbi, 2012); Gong Sun-ok, *Geu Noraeneun Eodiseo Watseulgga* [Where does the Song come from] (Paju, South Korea: Changbi, 2013); Han Gang, *Sonyeonyi Onda* [A Boy Returns] (Paju, South Korea: Changbi, 2014); Kang Han and Deborah Smith, *Human Acts : A Novel* (New York: Hogarth, 2016).

must seem natural and unconstructed.<sup>217</sup>

In the cases of visual artists, particularly expressionists and antirealists, Young argues, the closer they came to the ghettos and death camps, ‘the more likely they were to redefine their aesthetic mission as one of testifying to the crimes against them and their people.’<sup>218</sup> It is noteworthy that the goal of testimony was prior to any other including aesthetic sense, from an individual testimony and testimonial literature and arts.

Holocaust narratives were also found in other mediums such as film and photographs (Zelizer 1998). Barbie Zelizer, for instance, investigates how Holocaust images were remembered, commemorated, and used in visual media.<sup>219</sup> She focuses on the relations between media witnessing and collective memory in terms of how to remember the painful past.<sup>220</sup>

Recently, the focus of media witnessing has been upon the survivors’ testimonial role of bearing witness as it plays a significant role in addressing the reality of conflict and appealing to a community for public response to violence. It is important because the testimonial role of media witnessing helps overcome the passivity of journalism as simply observing, through the active engagement based on journalist’s embedded experience. In what follows, I first consider theoretical concepts of media witnessing by comparing eye-witnessing and bearing witness; then investigate the role of photojournalists as bearing witness to truth.

### **2.3 Debates of Media Witnessing in Conflict Reporting**

Paul Frosh defines media witness as ‘the witnessing performed *in*, *by*, and *through* the media. It is about the systematic and ongoing reporting of the experiences and realities

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<sup>217</sup> James E. Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust : Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990). 17.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera's Eye* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

<sup>220</sup> I discuss “how to remember a painful past rightly” in Chapter 5. Since remembering is a key practice in dealing with the past, I consider the relationship between the survivor’s memory and photography as a process of reconstruction of collective memory. See Chapter 5.

of distant others to *mass audiences*.<sup>221</sup> Media witnessing has been considerably discussed in media studies during the last decade (Barbie Zelizer 1998; John Durham Peters 2001; Kelly Oliver 2004; Paul Frosh 2008; Sue Tait 2011; Amy Richards and Jolyon Mitchell 2011). However, its concept and usages are intermingled. Media witnessing is a key element of journalism and it relates to fundamental questions of professional journalism such as truth and experience, presence and absence, death and pain, seeing and saying, and the trustworthiness of perception.<sup>222</sup> In this section, I first investigate theoretical aspects of media witnessing.

### 2.3.1 Witnessing to Visual Media Witnessing

In the past, the authority of witnessing lies on the basis that the witness/journalist “has been there” and “has seen an event in proxy.” Essentially, the audience had to rely on the only witness and his or her narration or description. The act of witness in the past had to face limits in ways of articulating an event one sees into words. Moreover, the witness’ subjective memory, experience, and interpretation normally plays a significant part in the process.

Technological developments, however, brought a dramatic change in journalism. Particularly audiovisual representation technologies gave an impact to the individual witness’ authority and influence. Mechanical representation of an event broadens the realm of sensory evidence. John Durham Peters points out the expanded realm of information by the media as below:

Audiovisual media [...] are able to catch contingent details of events that would previously have been either imperceptible or lost to memory. A camera can reveal the impact of a bullet in an apple; the tape recorder can fix an off-the-record comment. Such mechanical, ‘dumb’ media seem to present images and sounds as they happened, without the embellishments and blind-spots that human perception and memory routinely impose. We thus find ourselves endowed with a much amplified and nuanced record of

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<sup>221</sup> Paul Frosh and Amit Pinchevski, *Media Witnessing: Testimony in the Age of Mass Communication* (Basingstoke, England; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). 1.

<sup>222</sup> Peters, "Witnessing." 707.

events, a ‘super-abundance of details’ rich with evidentiary value.<sup>223</sup>

In the era of the abundance of information, ‘to witness an event’, Peters argues, ‘is to be responsible in some way to it.’<sup>224</sup> Through television, for example, witnessing became a domestic act. John Ellis describes it as ‘[being] separated in space yet united in time, the co-presence of the television image was developing a distinct form of witness.’<sup>225</sup> A result of the domestic act of witnessing through a television screen is that individuals rarely now suggest that “I don’t know what happened” in a given situation. Susan Sontag describes the experience of being a spectator as a “quintessential modern experience”:

Wars are now also living room sights and sounds. Information about what is happening elsewhere, called ‘news’, features conflict and violence – ‘If it bleeds, it leads’ runs the venerable guideline of tabloids and twenty-four-hour headline news shows – to which the response is compassion, or indignation, or titillation, or approval, as each misery heaves into view.<sup>226</sup>

The media circumstance of conflict reporting and its reception has been dramatically changed. In the past, the role of witnessing was solely given to journalists. Today, everyone can watch a conflict situation through the media, even lying on a couch at home or wherever. Moreover, visual witnessing by camera is more complicated than verbal or written witnessing in its manner of communication. Photographic images appear to be fixed and can be easily circulated by many people. As circulating images they can contribute to collective knowledge. Sontag points out the singularity of photography:

Awareness of the suffering that accumulates in a select number of wars happening elsewhere is something constructed. Principally in the form that is registered by cameras, it flares up, is shared by many people, and fades from view. In contrast to written account – which, depending on its complexity of thought, reference, and vocabulary, is pitched at a larger or smaller readership – a photograph has only one language and is destined

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid. 708.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> John Ellis, *Seeing Things: Television in the Age of Uncertainty* (London ; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000). 32.

<sup>226</sup> Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003). 16.

potentially for all.<sup>227</sup>

In our digital media society, a journalist's witnessing seems less important than in the past. Nevertheless, the role of journalists as bearing witness still plays its pivotal role in conflict reporting because it covers not only significant but dangerous events of life and death. More importantly, it is nearly impossible to know the truth related to a conflict merely through visual representation of a conflict, because truth requires value judgement based on a historical context. Although a photographic image itself has its text and functionality, its usage and reception are sometimes ambivalent. For this reason, eye-witnessing itself cannot bear witness to the truth of a violent conflict.

### 2.3.2 Eye-witnessing vs. Bearing witness

Then, how can media witness help revealing truth in conflict reporting? To develop the idea, we need to distinguish two acts of witnessing: *eye-witnessing* and *bearing witness*. John Durham Peters (2001) distinguishes a verb *witness* into a double aspect. The first aspect is a sensory experience, that is, 'the witnessing of an event with one's own eyes and ears'.<sup>228</sup> The act of witnessing is essentially relying on someone's experience who has been there in times and places where things happen. Second, along with a sensory experience, witnessing is also 'the discursive act of stating one's experience for the benefit of judgment about it.'<sup>229</sup> Hence, it is relying on a journalist's interpretation. In applying this to photojournalism, a visual representation can be easily understood as objective description, but it is a result of a subjective act of witnessing by an individual witness (photojournalist).

To witness therefore has two levels of behavior: the passive level one of *seeing* and the active level of *saying*.<sup>230</sup> Peters distinguishes two faces of witnessing:

In passive witnessing an accidental audience observes the events of the world; in active witnessing one is a privileged possessor and producer of

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid. 17.

<sup>228</sup> Peters, "Witnessing."

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

knowledge in an extraordinary, often forensic, setting in which speech and truth are policed in multiple ways.<sup>231</sup>

In the relation between photography and witnessing, this distinction is much clearer. In *passive* witnessing a citizen with a camera can capture an event accidentally but it does not necessarily mean the photograph reveals truth. Seeing or capturing does not change anything further than one's action. In *active* witnessing, on the other hand, a photojournalist who captures an event can *produce* better information of the hidden to the public.<sup>232</sup>

Peter's distinction between witnessing as *seeing* and *saying* is similarly argued by other scholars (Barbie Zelizer 1998; Paul Frosh 2008; Sue Tait 2011; Amy Richards and Jolyon Mitchell 2011). Sue Tait, for instance, argues that media witness should be distinguished between "eye-witnessing" as seeing in passive and "bearing witness" as saying in active. Bearing witness via media should aim to exceed eye-witnessing (or being a spectator).

Bearing witness has distinctive features from eye-witnessing in several aspects. First, bearing witness refers to 'media practices of producing testimony, however, the qualifier of "possibility" renders bearing witness provisional.'<sup>233</sup> It means that bearing witness carries more objectives than simple reporting. Moreover, bearing witness 'conjugates an explicitly moral practice, which is normatively linked with suffering or atrocity' and 'is central to journalism's legitimation.'<sup>234</sup> It has more valuable motif and meaning than voyeurism, that is, a journalistic vocation, seeking truth in spite of taking risks and facing danger. Bearing witness has a long history within the Christian tradition, which is beyond the scope of this chapter, but has been the subject of extensive discussions (John Durham Peters 2001, Paul Frosh 2008, Amy Richards 2010, Sue Tait 2011, and Jolyon Mitchell 2012).<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> I do not deny the citizen's participation of the witnessing process but rather agree that professional journalism and civil journalism can work collaboratively.

<sup>233</sup> Sue Tait, "Bearing Witness, Journalism and Moral Responsibility," *Media, Culture & Society* 33, no. 8 (2011). 1221.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Amy Richards, "Bearing Witness: An Analysis of the Reporting and the Reception of News About



The journalistic vocation often links to the aim of bearing witness, evoking public moral action. In *Remembering to Forget*, Barbie Zelizer sees “public response” as the vital role of bearing witness:

In some cases, ‘viewing images’ may now stand in for action itself, raising crucial questions about the shape of public response in the contemporary era. Bearing witness, then, may have turned into an act carved out of the shadows of habituation, a mere outline of the call for substantive action that it seems to have played at the end of World War II.<sup>236</sup>

For Zelizer, bearing witness plays a crucial role in promoting a moral responsibility in our time by viewing images. Related to photography, Zelizer posits that bearing witness by camera can promote moral *action* beyond evoking *feeling*. Her position focuses on the *active* role of journalism (bearing witness) rather than the *passive* (eye-witnessing). Zelizer therefore defines bearing witness as ‘an act of witnessing that enables people to take responsibility for what they saw, bearing witness moves individuals from the personal act of “seeing” to the adoption of a public stance by which they become part of a collective working through trauma together.’<sup>237</sup>

### 2.3.3 Bearing Witness as a Survivor’s Testimony

The concept of bearing witness is closely connected to a survivor’s *testimony*. The importance of survivors’ testimony is for their embodied knowledge of suffering and the mobilizing potential. Sue Tait (2011) argues,

The survivor bears witness to that which cannot be seen; the embodied knowledge of suffering; the limit-experience that defies representation. Testimony thus involves the attempt to translate affect into discourse in order to perform a response to trauma, and elicit an affective response that moralizes the audience’s future action.<sup>238</sup>

The power of a survivor’s testimony is not merely because it is a historical fact but

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Distant Suffering in the Light of John Howard Yoder’s Work on Witness”, (PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2010).

<sup>236</sup> Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera's Eye*. 213.

<sup>237</sup> Barbie Zelizer and Stuart Allan, *Journalism after September 11*, Communication and Society (London; New York: Routledge, 2003). 52.

<sup>238</sup> Tait, "Bearing Witness, Journalism and Moral Responsibility." 1227.

rather it is an embodied story. While a historical event can be superficial to audiences, the testimonial narrative has moral power that makes audiences sympathize with the pain of others. Shoshana Felman also writes the testimonial role of bearing witness as public responsibility for truth, by *addressing* and *appealing* to audiences and a community to take responsibility:

To bear witness is to take responsibility for truth: to speak, implicitly, from within the legal pledge and the juridical imperative of the witness's oath. To testify – before a court of Law or before the court of history and of the future, to testify, likewise, before an audience of readers or spectators – is more than simply to report a fact or an event or to relate what has been lived, recorded and remembered. Memory is conjured here essentially in order to *address* another, to impress upon a listener, to *appeal* to a community.... To testify is thus not merely to narrate, but to commit oneself; and to commit the narrative, to others: to take responsibility – in speech – for history or for the truth of an occurrence.<sup>239</sup>

Felman and her colleague Dori Laub, on the other hand, raise the issue of the “crisis of witnessing”, the parallel concept to media witnessing.<sup>240</sup> This idea concerns the impossibility of bearing witness: ‘the traumatic event that has left its survivors speechless, not because they did not witness it, but rather because they did so all too overwhelmingly.’<sup>241</sup> This is because, as Frosh argues, when words fail or are unavailable, trauma itself would bear witness incompletely; at the extreme, the survivors would be not real victims who were already dead; and finally, the survivors need healing first before witnessing.<sup>242</sup>

The Yale Project led by Dori Laub in 1979 was initiated in the respect of this concern. The project helped each survivor narrate his or her story both for the press and healing purposes, and recorded each testimony with a camera. Ironically, their

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<sup>239</sup> Shoshana Felman, "In an Era of Testimony: Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*," *Yale French Studies* 97 (2000). 103-104.

<sup>240</sup> Frosh and Pinchevski, *Media Witnessing: Testimony in the Age of Mass Communication*. 3. The idea of “crisis of witnessing” is about the concern that survivors are utilized rather than protected and healed from their trauma. Indeed, Frosh explains, ‘to speak of witnessing in this day and age is inevitably to invoke the discourse of the Holocaust witness, which has come to constitute a paradigm case for witnessing in general (Agamben, 1998; Caruth, 1996; Hartman, 1996; LaCapra, 2001; Langer, 1993).’

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

testimonies were not only valuable as historical documents but also powerful as bearing witness. Then, their recorded documents were introduced and circulated to many people and helped the respective audiences understand the process of witnessing. Paul Frosh argues that a by product of the Yale Project was to provide the media with the witness of survivors' testimony.<sup>243</sup>

Recent studies, however, have noticed the issue of reproduction and repetition of such audiovisual representation of survivors' testimonies of atrocities (Levi, 1987; Boltanski, 1999; Lippin, 1999; Hartman, 2000). After the Holocaust, the survivors' testimonies were overused via different genres for different purposes. Their stories are used and gone over repeatedly in different forms such as books and films. TV news continues to show a different version of witnessing. It thus changes the moral charge. Primo Levi argues,

The world in which we Westerners live today has grave faults and dangers, but when compared to former times our world has a tremendous advantage: everyone can know everything about everything. Information today is the 'fourth estate': at least in theory the reporter, the journalist and the news photographer have free access everywhere; nobody has the right to stop them or to send them away. Everything is easy: if you wish you can receive radio or television broadcasts from your own or any other country. You can go to the newsstand and choose the newspaper you prefer...<sup>244</sup>

Knowing or seeing violence in our world does not necessarily lead to a moral action, and it can have different effects such as "compassion fatigue" to audiences than moral response.<sup>245</sup>

Nevertheless, media witnessing plays a role of truth-telling more than eye-witnessing. Bearing witness reveals what is hidden and testifies what truth is by being there. In this way, the importance of contemporary media witnessing is in not merely (re)producing similar images with other conflicts but producing an authentic knowledge of a conflict situation—that is, truth. Zelizer maintains the role of photography as bearing witness and giving testimony.

Photographs are of particular importance here, for the act of giving

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<sup>243</sup> Ibid. 3-5.

<sup>244</sup> Levi, Woolf, and Bailey, *If This Is a Man; and the Truce*. 382-383.

<sup>245</sup> I discuss compassion fatigue in relation to representation of the pain of victims in Chapter 3.

testimony against atrocity tends to go beyond the mere authentication of horror and to imply the act of bearing witness, by which we assume responsibility for the events of our times—‘not merely to narrate but to commit oneself. ... to take responsibility for history or for the truth of an occurrence.’ Bearing witness constitutes a specific form of collective remembering that interprets an event as significant and deserving of critical attention.<sup>246</sup>

For this role of bearing witness, a journalist’s engagement of a conflict is essential. In photojournalism, the role of journalists becomes more crucial. Photographic images function as a text of witnessing by depicting a conflict but can be criticized as eye-witnessing as a spectator. Without a photojournalist’s moral responsibility, a photograph itself cannot achieve public authenticity. It is because the photographs are the vivid testimonies of journalists in proximity to the conflict, while confronting dangers. This is why the journalist’s role is crucial in revealing truth.

## **2.4 Photojournalists Bearing Witness to Violence**

### **2.4.1 Journalistic Vocation**

Bearing witness is inherently connected to the journalistic vocation, particularly seeking truth. Journalists who work at the frontline of conflict are exposed to as part of their job. Risk-taking, for them, is perceived to be as “part of the job”, to get closer proximity.<sup>247</sup> Howard Tumber and Frank Webster conducted extensive interviews with frontline journalists regarding their motivation and what they found is as below:

[T]hese reporters were drawn not only by the excitement of such assignments but also by the desire to “seek out the truth” and have a “front-row seat” at the making of history. For many of these journalists they perceive their moral duty of “truth seeking” as a “vocation.”<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera's Eye*. 10.

<sup>247</sup> Stuart Allan, "Witnessing in Crisis: Photo-Reportage of Terror Attacks in Boston and London," *Media, War & Conflict* 7, no. 2 (2014). 133-134.

<sup>248</sup> Amy Richards and Jolyon Mitchell, "Journalists as Witness to Violence and Suffering," in *The Handbook of Global Communication and Media Ethics*, ed. Robert S. Fortner and P. Mark Fackler (Malden, MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2011). 754. For details of the interviews, see Howard Tumber and Frank Webster, *Journalists under Fire: Information War and Journalistic*

This is important to our discussion of bearing witnessing. Bearing witness is not simply the passive depiction of a conflict (eye-witnessing). Journalistic truth-telling is based on not only their physical presence (they-were-there) but also their ‘moral duty to bear witness by being there’.<sup>249</sup> The journalists’ presence and response to a conflict is fundamental to being perceived as authentic. In this way, photojournalists not only capture the moment but also play a testimonial role to violence by *being there*.

Journalists are often exposed to significant danger as they require close proximity to their subjects in their attempt to bear witness. As Robert Capa famously says: ‘If your pictures aren’t good enough, you’re not close enough’.<sup>250</sup> In order to get the best photographs, photojournalists endure a great deal of personal risk. Every year a considerable number of frontline journalists are killed while working. Recently, dozens of journalists in each year were killed in countries in conflict (61 in 2014, 72 in 2015, and 48 in 2016).<sup>251</sup> Why do they go into the site of conflict in spite of the danger? What do they aim for from the risk-taking? How does their act of bearing witness relate to revealing truth?

Their motifs and practice, by being present and confronting dangers, are important to the matter of truthfulness. Because of their professional vocation and, desire for truth, their presence and reports attain a value as evidential records and testimonial documents. Journalists’ responsibility is to bear witness to a conflict, its violence and suffering. Amy Richards and Jolyon Mitchell consider the role of journalists bearing witness, writing that journalists function as “the proxy eyes and ears of the public” and “the proxy voice for the voiceless”.<sup>252</sup>

Frontline journalists’ professional vocation and practices become the authority

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*Practices* (London; Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publication, 2006).

<sup>249</sup> Richards and Mitchell, "Journalists as Witness to Violence and Suffering." 754.

<sup>250</sup> See

[http://pro.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=CMS3&VF=MAGO31\\_9\\_VForm&ERID=24KL535353](http://pro.magnumphotos.com/C.aspx?VP3=CMS3&VF=MAGO31_9_VForm&ERID=24KL535353)  
(Accessed on 29 October 2017)

<sup>251</sup> The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) provides data and research of journalists who are killed, imprisoned, and missing, and countries most censored each year since 1992. See "48 Journalists Killed in 2016 / Motive Confirmed," The Committee to Protect Journalists, <https://cpj.org/killed/2016/>. (Accessed 20 October 2017).

<sup>252</sup> Richards and Mitchell, "Journalists as Witness to Violence and Suffering." 752-773.

in their reporting of conflict and pursuit of truth. For their moral duty of truth seeking, frontline journalists' presence (having-been-there) and their testimonies attain "visual authentication".<sup>253</sup> In this way, the frontline journalists become an agent of witness and their visual representations become a text of witnessing.

#### **2.4.2 Frontline, Rooftop, and Embedded Journalism**

There are different methods of media witnessing to a conflict today. Richards and Mitchell divides it into three types: "independent" frontline journalism, rooftop journalism, and embedded journalism. Each of three types has pros and cons: First, independent frontline journalism has more freedom to see and report beyond the editor's direction but are exposed to considerable danger. Second, rooftop journalism corresponds with extremely dangerous situations like Baghdad, Iraq, and can provide an instant and 24-hours-live report on the conflict, while it often fails to provide a detailed context to dramatic events. This approach can often depend on local fixers who might also be partial regardless of the press' intention.<sup>254</sup> Lastly, embedded journalism, a longstanding tradition embodied by the model of war correspondent, might have deep understanding and experience from their embedded life in the field; while it has a danger that embedded journalists advocate a certain position attached to individuals and groups.

No matter 'where journalists are located, whether inside a tank, on a rooftop or in a caravan driving across the desert, combined with whom they rely upon their local information,' Richards and Mitchell suggest that this, 'all contributes to their ability to bear witness.'<sup>255</sup> One common question to all journalists in reporting conflict, however, is the matter of journalist's impartiality. From embedded journalists to local fixers, the core role is that they bear witness to the reality of a conflict because they know better than those who are not there. Similarly to the debate on the survivor's testimony, "impartiality" is a key issue through the long debate of media representation as whether it can be subjective or objective.

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<sup>253</sup> S. Cottle and M. Rai, "Between Display and Deliberation: Analyzing Tv News as Communicative Architecture," *Media, Culture & Society* 28, no. 2 (2006). 179.

<sup>254</sup> Richards and Mitchell, "Journalists as Witness to Violence and Suffering." 754-760.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid. 759-760.

In bearing witness through journalism, it is important to consider the matter of impartiality particularly in reporting extremely violent conflicts like the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. Citing the case of Fergal Keane, a well-known BBC correspondent, Richards and Mitchell raise a new set of questions with regard to a journalist's impartiality in conflict reporting. Keane was asked to testify to his experience in Rwanda for both the victims and offenders in the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). In spite of his limited experience, his witness based on what he saw had a huge impact to the court. His decision to testify for not only for the victims but the offenders raised controversial ethical questions on the role of journalist.<sup>256</sup>

### **2.4.3 Debates on the Journalism of Attachment**

At the centre of the debate on Keane's witnessing at the court lies the question of objectivity of journalism in conflict reporting. The responses to Keane's decision were largely divided between those who emphasized the importance of revealing truth (often in the USA) and those who underlined the importance of remaining impartial (more often from commentators in the UK).<sup>257</sup> This connects to debates surrounding the journalism of attachment.

The idea of journalism of attachment was first suggested by the former BBC reporter Martin Bell, defined as 'a journalism that cares as well as knows; that is aware of its responsibilities; that will not stand neutrally between good and evil, right and wrong, the victim and the oppressor.'<sup>258</sup> Through his embedded experience with the civilians of Sarajevo, Bosnia, seen by many as an extremely violent ethnic conflict, Bell came to the conclusion: 'journalists must avoid "shading the truth", highlight the fact that "war is a bad taste business" and therefore not be afraid to show the bloody reality of the effects of war.'<sup>259</sup>

Some critics like Philip Hammond describe journalism of attachment as

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<sup>256</sup> Ibid. 760-765.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid. 763-765.

<sup>258</sup> Martin Bell, "The Journalism of Attachment," in *Media Ethics*, ed. M. Kieran (London: Routledge, 1998). 19.

<sup>259</sup> Recited from Richards and Mitchell, "Journalists as Witness to Violence and Suffering." 765. The original reference is from Martin Bell, *In Harm's Way* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1995).

“advocacy journalism” with concerns of two possible flaws: it can favour one perspective while overlooking one’s falsity, and it can be a tool of nationalistic propaganda. Hammond claims:

Instead of truthful reporting, the agenda of advocacy journalism has sometimes made reporters highly selective, leading them to ignore inconvenient information ... And despite claims to be pursuing a moral, human rights agenda, the journalism of attachment has led to the celebration of violence against those perceived as undeserving victims.<sup>260</sup>

Hammond criticizes the dualistic, good versus evil, frame of advocacy journalism and questions whether it can be truly independent journalism. The debate between the journalism of attachment and the journalism of detachment, as Richards and Mitchell argue, is generally framed in a polarized fashion, ‘with advocates and proponents coming down forcefully on either side of the discussion.’<sup>261</sup> Nevertheless, Richards and Mitchell maintain the necessity of the journalist’s responsibility to engage in a violent conflict:

[J]ournalists do move from observer to witness, from a level of detachment to engagement, whenever they embark on covering a story about violence or suffering. Even if they do not recognize it, they do make a moral judgment when they decide to show certain images and not others, when they select one local eyewitness, when they put themselves in a vulnerable position to cover a story or when they decide to testify at a war crimes tribunal.<sup>262</sup>

It is impossible to be completely neutral or objective. Rather, journalists are given to make moral decisions every moment. Particularly in a conflict situation, the reality is not simple as much as different media attempt to represent and audiences often perceive.

In photojournalism, the issue becomes more critical. As an image is photographed, printed, and circulated around the world, multiple factors and steps affect how it is produced and interpreted. In this sense, the role of photojournalists

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<sup>260</sup> Philip Hammond, "Moral Combat: Advocacy Journalists and the New Humanitarianism," in *Rethinking Human Rights: Critical Approaches to International Politics*, ed. David Chandler (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). 180.

<sup>261</sup> Richards and Mitchell, "Journalists as Witness to Violence and Suffering." 766.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.



becomes fundamental in bearing witness to a conflict, because they have a better understanding of the reality of the complex context. This role has a thread of connection with Cartier-Bresson's "the decisive moment" in the way in which the decisive moment is produced by photographers' artistic sense and moral understanding of the social and political context. From the *engagement* and *embedded* experience with the civilians, photojournalists finally come to know which truth among (un)truths should be revealed and represented by a camera. To this end, we will explore two similar but different examples emerging out of very difficult cultural contexts: Eddie Adams and Ron Haviv.

## **2.5 Case Studies: Eddie Adams and Ron Haviv**

### **2.5.1 Eddie Adams' Saigon Execution (1968)**



Figure 2. *Saigon Execution*, 1 Feb 1968, Eddie Adams

Na Kyung-taek's image [Fig. 1] forms a striking contrast of two men that one (a soldier) is beating the other (a civilian). Audiences would have no clue who is good or bad, but it *does* describe who is an assailant and who is victim. It is reminiscent of Eddie Adams' controversial photograph *Saigon Execution* [Fig. 2] capturing the moment of the street execution of South Vietnamese officer General Nguyen Ngoc Loan executing a Viet Cong prisoner Nguyen Van Lem in Saigon (also known as Bay Lop), in Saigon,

Vietnam on 1 February 1968.<sup>263</sup> This photo represents the brutality of the Vietnam War by capturing the moment of killing on the street. The picture also forms a contrast of two men as an executor and victim in similar with Na Kyung-taek's photograph.

Adams won the Pulitzer Prize for this photograph in 1969 by capturing the moment of violence during the Vietnam War. However, its reception and interpretation were different from the photographer's intention. Adams considered himself a patriot and a Marine—he participated in 13 wars beginning with the Korean War in 1950 up to the Gulf War in 1991. He would never anticipate that 'the anti-war movement saw that photograph as proof that the Vietnam War was unjustified.'<sup>264</sup> In the documentary film *An Unlikely Weapon* (2008), Adams said that 'I still don't understand to this day why it was so important, because I have heard so many different versions of what this picture did, like it helped end the war in Vietnam.'<sup>265</sup>

As the photograph was released, it instantly became a symbol of the brutality of the Vietnam War which galvanized the American anti-Vietnam war protest.<sup>266</sup> It also raised the ethical question of the legitimacy of offering the violent image to mass audiences and whether it was morally right to expose General Nguyen's action of killing.<sup>267</sup> Most of the audiences interpreted the photograph by focusing on the brutality of the street execution violating the prisoner's human rights. As a result, General Nguyen was imprinted as an iconic villain at least to the Western audience. However, the story behind the image would present different meanings and interpretations. It was later known that General Nguyen was respected by the local community for his service. By contrast, the Vietcong prisoner Nguyen Van Lem was

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<sup>263</sup> See Eddie Adams, "Saigon Execution: South Vietnamese Officer Executes a Viet Cong Prisoner, 1 February 1968," (Austin, Texas: Dolf Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin). [https://www.cah.utexas.edu/db/dmr/gallery\\_lg.php?s=3&gallery=eddie\\_adams](https://www.cah.utexas.edu/db/dmr/gallery_lg.php?s=3&gallery=eddie_adams) (Accessed 24 October, 2017)

<sup>264</sup> Margot Adler, "The Vietnam War, through Eddie Adams' Lens," *NPR* 24 March 2009. <http://www.npr.org/2009/03/24/102112403/the-vietnam-war-through-eddie-adams-lens> (Accessed 27 October 2017)

<sup>265</sup> Susan Morgan Cooper, *An Unlikely Weapon: The Eddie Adams Story* (2008). The Vietnam War itself was controversial and can be interpreted from different perspectives. The reading and interpreting of Adams' photograph was different depending on the viewer's perspective.

<sup>266</sup> Adams, "Saigon Execution: South Vietnamese Officer Executes a Viet Cong Prisoner, 1 February 1968."

<sup>267</sup> See Eddie Adam, "Eulogy: General Nguyen Ngoc Loan," *The Times* July 27, 1998. (Accessed 24 August 2015)

the captain of a terrorist group who killed people in his community. Within the context, although he won the Pulitzer Prize for this photograph and the picture impacted to the anti-Vietnam war movement, can we say Adams's photography revealed truth?

The concept of truth related to violent conflict is ambiguous and can be interpreted by different audiences in different contexts. Since a photograph in a newspaper does not provide a sequence, it can be sometimes misinterpreted when there is not enough background understanding of the context. Then how and to what extent can we argue that photography reveals truth? How can photography help seek justice by witnessing who is right or bad as seen in the photographs such as Na Kyung-taek's and Eddie Adams'?

In spite of the ambiguity of photography, my contention is to argue that it has a power to reveal truth by capturing the decisive moment of conflict. I argue that the role of photography as revealing truth does not simply draw upon the image itself but rather it draws upon a photographer's understanding of the context. It is analogous to the tripod of communication: an agent of reporting, an utterance or text itself, and the audience who witness the text. Applied to photojournalism, photographic witnessing can be done by a photojournalist (agent), photographic image (text), and audience. Most research projects tend to focus on the utterance (text or image itself), along with ethical burdens and efficacy of subjectivity (Tait 2011), but it is also important to see the function of a photojournalist and audiences.<sup>268</sup> I particularly focus on the testimonial role of a photojournalist as an agent of media witness. Sometimes when a photojournalist becomes a witness to violence, photography becomes more than documentation but a *testimony*. Ron Haviv's work *Testimony* (1992) is the example.

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<sup>268</sup> Tait, "Bearing Witness, Journalism and Moral Responsibility." 1220-1221.

### 2.5.2 Ron Haviv's Testimony (1992)



Figure 3. *Bosnia* (1992), Ron Haviv

In April 1992, American photojournalist Ron Haviv gained permission to access the Tigers, a Serbian nationalist militia, by its charismatic leader Željko Raznotovic (known as Arkan). They were entering Bijeljina, the town in eastern Bosnia. There, Haviv witnessed ‘the first atrocities in the Bosnian war as the Tigers assaulted and killed Bosnian civilians.’<sup>269</sup> Despite being warned not to photograph any killings, he decided to document the atrocities that he witnessed. By doing so, he was put on Arkan’s death list. Despite all threats and danger, he documented and witnessed the moments of the genocide. His photographs later became critical evidence of ethnic cleansing by the Serbian paramilitary unit in the Bosnian War.

One of the photographs [Fig. 3] shows a Serbian soldier kicking a dying Bosnian Muslim woman lying on the ground with other civilians (1 woman and 1 man).<sup>270</sup> The soldier is holding a gun on his right hand and a cigarette on his left.<sup>271</sup> This photograph has similarities with Na Kyung-taek’s photograph. Both photographs capture the decisive moment of atrocity to civilians by the military force. Also, both photographers bear witness to the cruelty of the military forces by being there and confronting threat.

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<sup>269</sup> US Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Eyewitness Testimony: Ron Haviv," in *Bosnia Video Gallery* (Washington, D.C.: The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum).

<sup>270</sup> See Time, "100 Photos: Bosnia, Ron Haviv, 1992," (New York: Time).  
<http://100photos.time.com/photos/ron-haviv-bosnia> (Accessed 27 October 2017)

<sup>271</sup> <http://www.ronhaviv.com/testimony> (Accessed 27 October 2017)

Haviv calls the title of his project in Bosnia *Testimony*. Not only his photographs but his presence are his testimony, bearing witness to the violence in Bosnia. This is an example that photography is not only the evidence of the act of violence, it also plays a testimonial role witnessing to truth.

It took a long time before the photographs were used for revealing truth. Since it was photographed before the Bosnian war, the public interest was relevantly low. Individual audiences instantly criticized the cruelty of the Tigers, yet it was not extended to a social movement or political intervention. In an interview with James Estrin, a journalist of the *NY Times*, Haviv recalled his disappointment at the disinterest in the issue at the time.

I was hoping to prevent the war. And of course, there was no reaction. The war started, 100,000 and 200,000 people were killed on all sides and several million more became refugees – which led to the war in Kosovo.<sup>272</sup>

Haviv's motif was simple and clear. As a journalist he wanted to prevent war by documenting what he witnessed. What he has done is beyond eye-witnessing. He decided to publicize the "dangerous" photographs to the world, confronting the danger. Because of that, he had to live with death threats until the assassination of Arkan in 2000. What made him do this? He said he did his job as a journalist.

It was my job as a journalist and a photographer to document what I saw. [...] I had those photographs published and the world saw what I had done. The work was enough to show the world what this ethnic cleansing actually looked like.<sup>273</sup>

Not only because of the image (text), but also because of his embedded experience in the event, he became a witness to the cruelty of Arkan's Tigers. In doing so, his photographs had another life as evidence for the International War Crimes Tribunal. Moreover, he himself gave his testimony at the court. James Estrin comments on the difficulty that Haviv would have through his experience:

Traditionally, photojournalists' role is to document what they see, and

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<sup>272</sup> James Estrin, "Photography in the Docket, as Evidence," *New York Times* 2 April 2013.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

rarely do they willingly participate in trials. Just being thought of as a potential witness in a war crimes trial would make it even more difficult to photograph conflict.<sup>274</sup>

Nevertheless, Haviv has carried out his vocation, covering three genocides—Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. He once expected an immediate effect by photographing conflict. Despite powerful images of photographs, however, war and conflicts still happen until today. Then what can photography do for building peace? Over 20 years after the Bosnian conflict, Haviv suggests the role of photojournalist in conflict reporting:

... it is important for photojournalists to do their work even if they change only one person's thinking. [...] What we do as photographers is to create a body of evidence to hold people accountable.<sup>275</sup>

The role of photojournalists such as Na Kyung-taek and Ron Haviv was critical for revealing truth in the Gwangju 1980. They revealed truth by being there, confronting danger (vocation), and bearing witness to violence (testimony). In the following section, I will consider how a photojournalist(s) was engaged in the role of revealing truth and witnessing violence during the May of 1980.

## **2.6 Bearing Witness to Truth of the Gwangju Massacre**

In the case of Gwangju Massacre, photojournalism played both roles, namely the photographs *addressed* the violence of the Chun Doo-hwan regime to the public outside of Gwangju and *spoke for* the victims, the citizens of Gwangju. In spite of strict control of the press, the journalists were in Gwangju taking risks, they captured photographs, and disseminated the truth into the world.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

<sup>276</sup> I must note that the negative side of Korean journalism during this time, although I focus on the positive case of journalism in this chapter. Most of the major press were quiet and powerless. When journalism lost its function, Kim Young-taek argues, canards and malicious rumours were in full swing.

### 2.6.1 Journalistic Vocation as Revealing Truth

Korean journalists resisted the dictatorship and press control. The Martial Law Command tightened control of the media with strong censorship. During May 20-27, 1980, the Journalists Association of Korea (JAK) decided to protest against censorship by refusing to produce newspapers. However, the military regime forced the press companies to dismiss 717 journalists who participated in the protest.<sup>277</sup> Through the event, the military regime reinforced its control of the press and other media.

Song Jeong-min, former professor of Chonnam National University, analyzed the news reports during the May 18 period, comparing five press companies.<sup>278</sup> The research showed there was no single article that described what actually happened to the citizens of Gwangju. Song Jeong-min shows two tendencies that news media had under the suppression: one is 'self-control' (reduction of function) and the other is 'a determined choice toward one way'. Song argues through his analysis that the major press showed the first tendency, the local press the latter.<sup>279</sup>

Within the context, 35 journalists of the *Chonnam Maeil Shinmun* (Chonnam Daily News) announced the 5.13 Freedom of the Press Declaration. This statement consisting of seven self-examinations and five resolutions showed the journalists' determined tendency to protest against the dictatorship.<sup>280</sup> As the day May 18 came, however, the situation was dramatically changed. The citizens of Gwangju were in a panic because of the excessive use of force by the troops. The journalists who had resigned immediately wrote and photographed the atrocities—the troops beating citizens, bleeding citizens, and the chaos.

On 19 May 1980, when Na Kyung-taek took the photograph [Fig. 1], the situation became worse. At that time, anyone could be mistaken as a protester and

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<sup>277</sup> Oh Jae-il, *5.18 Minjuhwa Undong-Gwa Eollon Tujaeng* [5.18 Democratic Movement and Journalism] (Gwangju, South Korea: 5.18 Memorial Foundation, 2014). 7-8; 26-31.

<sup>278</sup> Song Jeong-min, "Research on Reality Construction of News: Central to Reports of May 18 in the Korean News Media". Research subjects consist of three major press (The *Dong-A Ilbo*, the *Chosun Ilbo*, and the *Seoul Shinmun*) and two local press of Kwangju (The *Chonnam Maeil* and the *Chonnam Ilbo*).

<sup>279</sup> Ibid. (Recited from Oh Jae-il, *5.18 Minjuhwa Undong-Gwa Eollon Tujaeng*. 33.)

<sup>280</sup> Oh Jae-il, *5.18 Minjuhwa Undong-Gwa Eollon Tujaeng*. 33-38.

treated like a rioter. He needed to hide himself from the sight of the police/troopers. It was too dangerous not to hide; nevertheless, Na Kyung-taek and other photojournalists decided to be there and documented the atrocities. He recalled the time

In spite of the dangerous situation that threatened my life, the only reason I captured these photographs was to record truth.<sup>281</sup>

Na Kyung-taek was willing to face danger to document truth. His vocation as a journalist was determined. Under the censorship, as he and his colleagues could not report the news as they want, they made their decision. On 20 May 1980, the 35 journalists, including Na Kyung-taek, decided to resign from *Chonnam Maeil Shinmun*.<sup>282</sup> They wrote a letter of resignation comprised of only four sentences:

We saw. We, with our eyes, clearly saw that men were dragged by force as if a dog and were killed. But we were not able to write even a line on the newspaper. We are so ashamed that we put down our pens.<sup>283</sup>

During this period, the role played by foreign journalists was crucial. Under the strong press censorship, Korean news media could not publicize what actually happened in Gwangju. Even Koreans who lived outside of the Gwangju area did not know the truth but only learned from the news media manipulated by the government. Thus, foreign journalists were the only gate to reveal what happened in Gwangju.

A German cameramen of the ARD Jürgen Hinzpeter, a so called the “blue-eyed witness”, who first reported the Gwangju Massacre to the world, contributed to revealing the reality of the massacre.<sup>284</sup> He was in Tokyo when he first heard about

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<sup>281</sup> Na Kyung-taek, *Angle and Nundongja 1967-2007* [Angle and Eyes 1967-2007] (Seoul: Sajin Bipyongsa, 2007).

<sup>282</sup> Na Kyung-taek was one of the 35 journalists who resigned the *Chonnam-Maeil Shinmun*.

<sup>283</sup> Jae-il, *5.18 Minjuhwa Undong-Gwa Eollon Tujaeng*.

<sup>284</sup> Hinzpeter, renowned as the “blue-eyed witness”, played a crucial role in reporting what happened in Gwangju during the days to the outside world. See the documentary film on his witnessing story to the Gwangju uprising, Jang Young-joo, “Blue-Eyed Witness: May of 1980,” in *KBS Sunday Special* (Seoul: KBS, 18 May 2003). On 22 May 1980, the German ARD news program *Tagesschau* first broadcasted a striking report of the Gwangju uprising, the small town of South Korea, followed by CBS Morning News on 23 May 1980. Recently, in 2017, a Korean film *A Taxi Driver* (Jang Hoon, 2017) that covers the story of Hinzpeter and a taxi driver who helped him during the Gwangju uprising was released on screen and gained a big success.



the unstable situation of Korea. He succeeded in infiltrating the city of Gwangju although the Martial Law Command prohibited the press from entering the city. Before his reporting and audiovisual documents, the tragedy of Gwangju was hidden or distorted. The Martial Law Command via the press and media announced that the riot of Gwangju was organized by a communist group who were trying to break the nation. Visual evidence recorded by Hinzpeter's camera, however, showed a totally different reality. It not only addressed the reality of the Gwangju Massacre but also appealed to foreign countries to challenge the Chun Doo-hwan regime.<sup>285</sup>

### **2.6.2 Bearing Witness to the Public**

The photograph [Fig. 1] captures a moment of beating/being beaten, rather than the confrontation between the troops and protesters or the aftermath of the massacre. The photographer Na Kyung-taek wanted to capture the moment of truth of the Gwangju massacre and witness the violent acts of the government. The image represents beating as an act of violence and offers a vision of either an offender and victim or a military (force) and a citizen (nonviolence). In this image, the student simply stands for the victimized, innocent, and non-resistant. Na Kyung-taek gave the photograph this caption: 'Even an Army medic joins the brutal suppression, beating an unresisting student.' Through the photograph, the photographer seems to emphasize the injustice and brutality of the Martial Army Command regarding the Gwangju massacre.

His photographs became a series of symbolic images that revealed the violence of the Chun Doo-hwan regime. It took seven years until his photographs appeared to the public. Avoiding the surveillance of the Chun Doo-hwan regime, those photographs had been introduced and circulated by civilians who protested for democracy. Then, in June 1987, massive civil protests, the so called the June Uprising, burst across the nation against the military dictatorship. It is largely agreed that the 1987 June Uprising was the successor of the Gwangju Uprising, requesting the end of the military dictatorship and the democracy of Korea.

Significantly, the photographs witnessing the atrocities of the Gwangju

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<sup>285</sup> Jurgen Hinzpeter, "I Bow My Head," in *The Kwangju Uprising: Eyewitness Press Accounts of Korea's Tiananmen*, ed. Henry Scott-Stokes and Jai-eui Lee (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2000). 63-76.

massacre had a significant impact upon both the protesters and the public. These visual documents capturing the atrocities by the troops became vivid symbolic evidence of the injustice and violence of the military dictatorship. Although it happened seven years before, the photographs froze the moment of the past as it was and disclosed the truth that might have been forgotten. A series of photo documents therefore contributed to building the democracy of Korea by addressing the truth not only to Koreans but to foreigners. These photographs later were circulated to broad audiences around the world through different formats such as exhibitions, archives, photobooks, museums, and online mediums.

### 2.6.3 Bearing Witness to Victims

The uniqueness of the role of journalists in the Gwangju is that the major photographers who reported of the Gwangju are not only journalists but also citizens of Gwangju as well as victims of the atrocity. The May 18 Foundation runs on-and-offline archives of historical documents, including photographs. Most of the photographs in this archive are contributed by the five local photographers, such as Kim Young-bok, Na Kyung-taek, Hwang Chong-gun, Kim Nyung-man, and Shin Bok-jin.<sup>286</sup> These five photographers who contributed photographic evidences of the massacre were all based in the Gwangju area. For them, the Gwangju was not a merely site for reporting but their home. It has a significance to our discussion on the journalist's role in bearing witness—related to the attachment of the victims, as the survivor's testimony, and as the citizen witnessing.

In Na Kyung-taek's case, his reportage was close to the journalism of attachment (more precisely he is an insider). Inevitably, he had a strong attachment with the citizens of Gwangju. He would know the reality of the brutal conflict better than any foreign correspondent. Thus, he could understand the whole context. Moreover, his attachment to people in Gwangju would make him more aware of such brutal massacre. Although the attachment of people may result in partiality, in the case

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<sup>286</sup> Kim Young-bok owned a local photo studio in Gwangju; Na Kyung-taek worked for the *Chonnam Maeil*, a local press in Gwangju; Hwang Chong-gun and Kim Nyung-man worked at Dong-A Ilbo based on Gwangju; and Shin Bok-jin worked at the Gwangju Ilbo, a local press in Gwangju. You can access the online archive via this link, <http://archives.518.org/>.

of Gwangju, it stimulated Na Kyung-taek to react actively by bearing witness to the violence and suffering in Gwangju.

Moreover, he was also one of the victims. The Gwangju Massacre was the atrocities carried out by the government exceptionally to a regional area, the city of Gwangju. The formation of conflict was a confrontation between the military government and the Gwangju city. They were exposed by the violence and suppression just because they were in Gwangju. The injured victims were their families, brothers and sisters, and neighbours.<sup>287</sup> The citizens fought together, helped one another, and mourned in unity. And Na Kyung-taek was there with them, and what he photographed were not “their” story but “his” story.

## 2.7 Conclusion

I have investigated the role of photography as revealing truth in conflict reporting, focusing on Na Kyung-taek’s photograph [Fig. 1] in the context of the May 18 Gwangju Democratic Uprising in 1980. His photograph captured the decisive moment of the atrocity incurred by the Chun Doo-hwan’s military regime. It is an example of how photography helps us seek and capture an aspect of the truth in a violent conflict. I discussed two forms of media witnessing as eye-witnessing and bearing witness. While eye-witnessing simply means an act of seeing and is passive, bearing witness implies activity such as saying, engaging, advocating, and testifying. In applying to journalism, media witness has both characteristics as eye-witnessing and bearing witness. To overcome spectatorship through eye-witnessing, I argue that the role of photo-journalists is crucial.

Since Na Kyung-taek was *engaged* and *embedded* in the field of the massacre, he could have a proxy eyes of the conflict—what is truth. He bore witness to truth by photographing the atrocities because seeking truth is his task as a journalist. He was willing to risk danger. His dangerous work became the basis of his truthfulness for their witness. Lastly, his photograph played a powerful role of visual testimony

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<sup>287</sup> In Korean culture until 1980s, a local neighborhood was more than just residential meaning, but they were a whole community as brothers and sisters. In the Cholla area, including Gwangju, this social culture was more distinctive than other areas.

speaking for the victims since he was part of the community. Within the context, his photograph bore witness to violence and revealed elements of the truth of the Gwangju Uprising.



## CHAPTER 3. REPRESENTING THE PAIN OF VICTIMS



Figure 4. A Child with his Father's Portrait,  
copyright @ *Der Spiegel*

What do you see and feel when you look at this image? What kinds of thoughts and feelings are aroused by it? A little child seemingly around four or five years old is clutching a man's portrait. Perhaps it is more precise to say that the child is leaning on the frame of the portrait. He is gazing forward with unfocused eyes and the eyelids look heavy and sleepy. What is he looking at—what is happening before him? This photograph [Fig. 4]<sup>288</sup> does not explain the context in detail to its audience, but it evokes a certain feeling such as lonesome and tiresome, grief and sadness, even curiosity. What happened to this little child?

This particular photograph played a role in drawing significant attention to the May 18 Democratic Uprising (hereafter “Gwangju Uprising”) throughout global media outlets. This photograph was captured by a foreign journalist at the group

<sup>288</sup> The image is captured from the website of the May 18 Memorial Foundation at [www.518.org](http://www.518.org). (Accessed 15 December 2017)

funeral for the victims of the Gwangju Uprising on 29 May 1980. The image was first published in the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, the boy in the picture became a symbol of the victims of the Gwangju Uprising.<sup>289</sup> The symbolic image inspired numerous people around the world to turn their gaze toward the suffering and human rights abuses in Gwangju. How could this particular photograph appeal to its audience? To what extent was the image so special?

The picture contains two faces, one is the boy and the other is his father. The boy's puzzled face is in odd contrast to the father's face. In the portrait, the father seems expressionless and speechless. The boy's eyes stare into the middle distance. We cannot see what he is looking at. It might be mourners at the funeral or simply the actual coffin of his father. This little boy's face looks profound and mysterious. He looks exhausted, sad, and sleepy. His eyes indicate that he is thinking something—maybe missing his father, or perhaps that he is in a daze—even unable to recognize the situation and what he lost. This picture provokes different feelings and reactions.

The mood of the photograph is particularly calm and tranquil compared to other photographs taken during the uprising. It was from the joint funerals of the victims of the brutal massacre. It would have been crowded with many victims' families and echoing with continuous wailing cries. Sadness and sighs, as well as anger and rage were common. There are many different photographs representing the suffering of the victims at the funerals.<sup>290</sup> The specificity of this particular image of "a grieving child" is in its *contemplative* mood. A moderate expression of suffering in the photograph has appealed to audiences to *empathize* with the child as a victim of violence.

This understated photograph invites the audience to ponder the circumstances of the subject in the image. As an audience member, I found two opposite experiences in reception of these photographs: some photographs attracted me to view them more closely, while others made me step back. When I studied some horrible images of the atrocities from this time, I was not able to stare at them, rather my reaction was to look

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<sup>289</sup> "Remember the May 18 Democratic Movement ", The May 18 Memorial Foundation, <http://www.518.org/sub.php?PID=0101>. (Accessed 15 December 2017)

<sup>290</sup> You can find other photographs of the funeral at the May 18 Online Archives (<http://archives.518.org/>). Most images depict the victims' families who are crying and wailing.

away. In my experience, the initial shock remains more visceral than other feelings related to the victims in the photographs.

In Chapter One, I discussed two war photography movements from 1850s to 1950s, realism and surrealism. Realism in the chapter means realistic representation of the horror of war such as wounded soldiers and graves of the dead. I argued that the realistic portrait of war was “too close” between photographs and audiences. Such images may give an instant shock but would fail to lead audiences to act responsibly. This is the main reasoning of those who were concerned about the negative effect of photographic representation of other’s suffering. In this chapter I discuss further suffering and empathy (compassion).

There are various ways of reading photographs. What I am trying to do is to look at the photographs from a peacebuilding perspective. Compassion (or empathy) is a key element for building peace. In relation to the media coverage of the pain of others in crisis, my question focuses on whether photographic representation of suffering in the media promotes compassion from its audience. There are considerable debates on photography and its effects, focusing on the pain of others in crisis and the audience’s reception in distance (Sontag 1977; 2003, Susan Moeller 1999, John Taylor 2000, Carolyn Dean 2004, Sue Tait 2008, Susie Linfield 2010, and David Campbell 2014). Journalists aim to promote moral and emotional awareness about the pain of others all over the world, while critics express their concerns regarding its negative effects to the audience in public best known as compassion fatigue.

I distinguish here between two types of photographic representation of suffering: direct representation of physical suffering and indirect representation of invisible emotional suffering. The first direct representation resonates with the argument developed in Chapter One, relating to the realism of war photography. The latter, however, is different. The way of indirect representation of emotional suffering can be an alternative to representing the physical pain of victims in conflict. My argument therefore focuses on the significant role of photography in representing the emotional suffering of victims in the Gwangju Uprising. I found that the 20<sup>th</sup> century social documentary photography is characterized as “emotional photography” to raise social awareness and move the audience to action.

My contention is that the photograph [Fig. 4] is an example of how



photography can promote empathy, in a similar fashion as some social documentary photographers did during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>291</sup> To develop this idea, I first consider various theoretical debates relating to the representation of suffering. Then, I investigate how documentary photography can focus on emotional representation. I compare two examples: direct and physical representation and then indirect and emotional representation. In this complex and multi-layered emotional landscape, I lastly try to develop a Christian perspective by considering the role of the Church for the victims of the Gwangju Uprising.

### **3.1 Debates on Photographic Representation of Suffering**

#### **3.1.1 Photographer, Victim, and Audience**

There are generally three perspectives in theoretical debates on photographic representation of suffering, focusing on the role and place of the photographer in terms of photographer, the victim, and the audience. First, the *photographers* who capture images of suffering are doing their work to further their vocation and entrepreneurial purposes. The main ethical concerns of the media as a producer of such images are related to reporting someone's suffering to the world and companies earning profit from the suffering of others. Journalists are also concerned with how to affect society by showing such images.

Second, there are ethical issues in photographing victims as *a subject*. This refers to the human rights of those who are photographed with certain purposes, even when the intention is morally good. For example, one of the goals of photographic representation of suffering could be to promote charity and donations.<sup>292</sup> Photographic representation of suffering is also related to memory. Those images can be fixed as stereotypes, enduring a long time after the original photograph.<sup>293</sup> Thus, there should

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<sup>291</sup> Graham Clarke, *The Photograph*, Oxford History of Art (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). 145-165. Also see Liz Wells, *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, Fifth ed. (London; New York: Routledge; Taylor & Francis Group, 2015). 89-98.

<sup>292</sup> See Chapter 2 on "Photojournalism and Human Rights" in Susie Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance : Photography and Political Violence* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

<sup>293</sup> Many images regarding violent conflicts in history like Jews in Holocaust are fixed as stereotyped

be sophisticated considerations and ethical criteria put in place before photographing victims in crisis.

Lastly, there are concerns about *the audience* who view and consume the violent and painful images. In this area, scholars and critics have often focused on the impact of photographic representation of suffering to the audience, particularly whether those images actually promote moral responses. Their concerns range from categories including compassion fatigue theory, pornography, stereotyped memory, and sensationalism. These discussions tend to focus on an audience's emotional aspect in reception of images. This is what this chapter focuses on. Based upon her extensive work on the subject, Susan Sontag may be the best person to begin the discussion.

### 3.1.2 Sontag's Concerns on Negative Impacts of Photography

Empathy (or compassion) is fundamental when *we* look at the images of other's suffering. It is commonly argued that the failure of morality today is related to the loss of empathetic capacity toward others. Quoting Virginia Woolf, in *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003), Susan Sontag identifies the failure of our morality as a failure of imagination and empathy:

Not to be pained by these [unbearable] pictures, not to recoil from them, not to strive to abolish what causes this havoc, this carnage – these, for Woolf, would be the reactions of a moral monster. And she is saying, we are not monsters, we members of the educated class. Our failure is one of imagination, of empathy: we have failed to hold this reality in mind.<sup>294</sup>

This phenomenon becomes more distinctive in photography than other mediums because photography captures and dramatizes a moment of suffering and produces a fixed memory. Critics like Sontag have voiced their concerns about the ambivalent impact of photography on individuals and society.

Susan Sontag, a cultural critic and pioneer of the topic, made a significant

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memory about victims of conflict. The memory is part of history but not the whole history about Jews. See Carolyn J. Dean, *The Fragility of Empathy after the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

<sup>294</sup> Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003). 7.

contribution to the debate regarding the reception of photographic representation of suffering (1977; 2003).<sup>295</sup> Her book *On Photography* (1977) is 'a passionate and brave effort to think through photography as an affective and effective medium, to understand how and why it impacts us so deeply,' as Sarah Parsons comments.<sup>296</sup> It is an important book because of the way in which Sontag attempted to 'understand the *moral* implications of the power of photographs to provoke strong emotions.'<sup>297</sup> She provides us with a useful criterion for understanding the link between photography, emotion, and ethics. At the heart of the link is the question of whether photographic representations of suffering in violent conflict can actually promote the audience's moral actions.

Sontag has expressed in *On Photography* her doubts about the negative impact of photography on the audience's moral sense.<sup>298</sup> She focuses on the audience's reception, particularly emotional impact, in viewing traumatic images of suffering. She relates, for instance, her experience at age twelve when she had encountered photographs of Bergen-Belsen and Dachau featuring the Nazi concentration camps in a bookstore in Santa Monica. She recalls her experience:

I looked at those photographs, something broke. Some limit had been reached, and not only that of horror; I felt irrevocably grieved, wounded, but a part of my feelings started to tighten; something went dead; something is still crying.<sup>299</sup>

Sontag refers to her experience as a "negative epiphany" about the world that she had never known before. She was shocked by viewing tragic images of suffering that she had never seen. This story shows, in one sense, how photographs can be effective in emotionally impacting the audience. In another sense, the story also indicates that such a strong emotional impact by photographic images can be negative to the audience, particularly regarding moral sensibility.

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<sup>295</sup> *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 1990 [1977]); Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*.

<sup>296</sup> Sarah Parsons, "Sontag's Lament: Emotion, Ethics, and Photography," *Photography & Culture* 2, no. 3 (November 2009). 290.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> She reversed her argument on the negative impact of photography in terms of compassion fatigue later in Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*.

<sup>299</sup> *On Photography*. 20.

a. *Voyeuristic Desire*

Between photography, emotion, and ethics, Sontag's argument can be summarized as having three aspects—desire, familiarity, and knowledge. First, she distinguishes desire from moral feelings in looking at photographs of suffering. 'The images that mobilize conscience are,' Sontag argues, 'always linked to a given historical situation.'<sup>300</sup> She claims:

Desire has no history—at least, it is experienced in each instance as all foreground, immediacy. It is aroused by archetypes and is, in that sense, abstract. But moral feelings are embedded in history, whose personae are concrete, whose situations are always specific.<sup>301</sup>

Voyeuristic desire has no historical context—but on its surface as images. 'It seems that', as Sontag correctly puts it, 'the appetite for pictures showing bodies in pain is as keen, almost, as the desire for ones that show bodies naked.'<sup>302</sup> Morality, however, has to be embedded in a certain history. The mobilization of the audience into moral action depends on each audience's historical awareness, not the intensity of photographic representation of suffering. Carolyn Dean points out that 'geographical, ethnic, and social distance may preclude or distort compassion.' Dean maintains:

[...] efforts to inspire moral action on behalf of the poor and disenfranchised presumed that arousing human compassion required some symbolic proximity to the sufferer. One had to be inspired by the powers of imagination to feel the likeness to the sufferer that images or narratives of violation were meant to generate. These images, however, could also arouse the "wrong" sort of compassion, or insincere forms of sympathy. Diderot, Rousseau, and Balzac, among others, each presumed that all natural human compassion has socio-historical limits determined by the extent of our real likeness to others. [...] In short, imaginary likeness overcomes the power of local allegiances and renders the concept of suffering humanity possible, but too much distance leads to insufficient or disingenuous sympathy.<sup>303</sup>

The voyeuristic desire of looking without sufficient or sincere sympathy is often used

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<sup>300</sup> Ibid. 17.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid. 16-17.

<sup>302</sup> *Regarding the Pain of Others*. 36.

<sup>303</sup> Dean, *The Fragility of Empathy after the Holocaust*. 89-90.

as a metaphor for pornography. Sue Tait develops the metaphor of pornography with 'the corruption of spectatorship' and 'the impoverishment of public sentiment'.<sup>304</sup> For Dean and Tait, the metaphor of pornography is used to illustrate a series of symptoms of the corruption of empathy such as the degradation of the victim of brutality and the Holocaust as entertainment, spectator sport, and re-desecration of Holocaust victims, and the literary over-identification with both the perpetrators of atrocity and the victims.<sup>305</sup>

*b. Familiarity*

Sontag's second argument is familiarity with images of pain. Viewing photographs of atrocities may have a strong emotional impact on audiences but it does not guarantee that the audience will be lead into moral action. Emotional feeling generated by the images does not last long but rather wanes as similar images breed familiarity. Sontag agrees with the powerful role of photographs but also points out the process of being familiarized:

To suffer is one thing; another thing is living with the photographed images of suffering, which does not necessarily strengthen conscience and the ability to be compassionate. It can also corrupt them. Once one has seen such images, one has started down the road of seeing more—and more. [...] An event known through photographs certainly becomes more real than it would have been if one had never seen the photographs—think of the Vietnam War. [...] But after repeated exposure to images it also becomes less real.<sup>306</sup>

It is a major contribution that she develops the individual reception of horrific images further into the idea of pornography. Like pornography, viewing traumatic photographs of atrocities becomes a sort of breaking-a-taboo experience the first time. As the experience is repeated, however, 'the sense of taboo which makes us indignant and sorrowful is not much sturdier than the sense of taboo that regulates the definition of

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<sup>304</sup> Sue Tait, "Photographies of Violence? Internet Spectatorship on Body Horror," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 25, no. 1 (2008). 95.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

<sup>306</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*. 20.

what is obscene.’<sup>307</sup> Sontag continues:

The vast photographic catalogue of misery and injustice throughout the world has given everyone a certain familiarity with atrocity, making the horrible seem more ordinary—making it appear familiar, remote (“it’s only a photograph”), inevitable.<sup>308</sup>

The fragility of the ethical content of photographs is evident in most cases, with the exception of photographs like the Nazi camps. ‘Most photographs do not keep,’ as Sontag argues, ‘their emotional charge.’<sup>309</sup> Even photographs of the Nazi camps were not familiar or banal when they were first seen. Today, however, Holocaust images are not the same as they were in the past; even they are used for the entertainment business such as in Hollywood.<sup>310</sup>

*c. Knowledge as Information*

Finally, photographs visually provide knowledge as information about the unknown or unseen world which is distinguished from authentic knowledge. This visual knowledge is limited to providing a thorough understanding of reality since a camera focuses on a certain part of reality by framing it, while excluding the rest of reality. Photographic representation is ultimately a semblance, not authentic knowledge. Sontag argues that:

the camera’s rendering of reality must always hide more than it discloses. [...] The limit of photographic knowledge of the world is that, while it can goad conscience, it can, finally, never be ethical or political knowledge. The knowledge gained through still photographs will always be some kind of sentimentalism, whether cynical or humanist. It will be a knowledge at bargain prices—a semblance of knowledge, a semblance of wisdom; as the act of taking pictures is a semblance of appropriation, a semblance of rape.<sup>311</sup>

According to Sontag, knowledge as information is different from understanding of the

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<sup>307</sup> Ibid. 20.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid. 21.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

<sup>310</sup> Some examples are *Schindler’s List* (Steven Spielberg, 1993), *Life is Beautiful* (Roberto Benigni, 1997), *The Pianist* (Roman Polanski, 2002), and *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* (Mark Herman, 2008).

<sup>311</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*. 23-24.

pain of others. Understanding someone's suffering requires a relationship in time and proximity. The knowledge gained through photographic representation reflects no such relationship—its context, continuity, and communication of photographs. It may have an emotional impact on the audience; but it would fail because “shock therapy” gives an emotional impact without understanding so does not last long. Then, the level of reception would decrease gradually by repeated exposure, causing emotional fatigue.

To sum up, photographic representation of suffering may have a strong emotional impact on the audience. Yet, it may fulfil a viewer's voyeuristic desire in his or her separation from history (pornography); although it may be shocking at first, its impact may decrease by repeated exposure (sensationalism); and finally, knowledge gained from represented images is limited to a superficial level and does not provide full understanding of another's suffering (failure of empathy). In this respect, it seems that photographic representation of suffering has a negative impact on the audience rather than a positive. Then, what does it mean to photograph the pain of others, particularly victims of violent conflict? Does photography always fail to represent other's suffering? If not, to what extent does photography represent the pain of victim's properly? To answer these questions, I will discuss compassion fatigue theory, and more particularly, whether this theory is entirely persuasively or largely a concern of critics.

### 3.1.3 Moeller's Compassion Fatigue Theory

Sontag's concerns regarding emotional fatigue by photographic representation of suffering have been developed by several scholars (Susan Moeller: 1999; John Taylor: 2000; Carolyn Dean: 2004; Sue Tait: 2008; Susie Linfield: 2010; and David Campbell: 2014).<sup>312</sup> These scholars have raised questions regarding the effect(s) of photographic

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<sup>312</sup> Susan D. Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War, and Death*.; John Taylor (New York: Routledge, 1999); John Talor, "Problems in Journalism: Realism, the Nature of News, and the Humanitarian Narrative," *Journalism Studies* 1 (2000); Dean, *The Fragility of Empathy after the Holocaust*.; Tait, "Photographies of Violence? Internet Spectatorship on Body Horror."; Linfield, *The Cruel Radiance : Photography and Political Violence*.; and David Campbell, "The Myth of Compassion Fatigue," in *The Violence of the Image: Photography and International Violence*, ed. Liam Kennedy and Caitlin Patrick (London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014).

representation of suffering in journalism and the media. Susan Moeller, one of the key researchers in the discussion, focuses on the cause and effect of compassion fatigue between crisis reporting and its audience in the United States.

‘Why, despite the haunting nature of many of these images,’ she asks, ‘do we seem to care less and less about the world around us?’<sup>313</sup> Compassion fatigue theory is basically a concern about the negative effect of media reporting of distant suffering. The theory insists that repeated and formulaic reportage of suffering from a distance has functioned as a negative cause that produces in Western audiences a public numbness regarding the pain of others.<sup>314</sup> In her book, *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War and Death* (1999), Moeller claims:

Compassion fatigue is the unacknowledged cause of much of the failure of international reporting today. It is at the base of many of the complaints about the public’s short attention span, the media’s peripatetic journalism, the public’s boredom with international news, the media’s preoccupation with crisis coverage.<sup>315</sup>

Moeller maintains that compassion fatigue is the cause and effect of moral insensibility and inactivity in the relation to the media. Analyzing the American news coverage of the crisis in the world, she maintains that compassion fatigue affects the media:

Compassion fatigue abets Americans’ self-interest [...] reinforces simplistic, formulaic coverage [...] ratchets up the criteria for stories that get coverage [...] tempts journalists to find ever more sensational titbits in stories to retain the attention of their audience. [...] encourages the media to move on to other stories once the range of possibilities of coverage have been exhausted so that boredom doesn’t set in.<sup>316</sup>

Moeller’s argument on compassion fatigue provides a useful framework within which to examine the ecology of the media representation of crisis and conflict. The concerns of those like Sontag and Moeller are morally important; but there is no evidence to prove the compassion fatigue theory. While it makes insightful observations regarding

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<sup>313</sup> Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War, and Death*. 4.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid. 1-5.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid. 2.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid.



the relationship between emotion and photographs, it is too simplistic and only applicable at an individual level. In fact, there are various factors to discuss on the effect of photographic representation of suffering. 'The problem with Moeller's argument', as David Campbell argues, 'is that it encompasses so many different factors that the idea of compassion fatigue functions as an empty signifier for a vast range of media-related concerns.'<sup>317</sup>

It is too complex to explain the reality with the concept of compassion fatigue. Campbell points out Moeller's dualistic idea regarding the American news media and ambiguous understanding of compassion fatigue:

[...] the mainstream media is understood principally in terms of education and that the (American) public is considered to be in a "compassion fatigue stupor". But it is the questions that map the binary contradiction which besets Moeller's text – is compassion fatigue a condition of the population that affects the media? Or is compassion fatigue a condition of the media that affects the population? [...] this uncertainty is rife and unresolved, so that compassion fatigue is variously, and confusingly, understood as both a cause that acts on the media and an effect that results from the media's actions. Or, as Moeller states, "compassion fatigue is a result of inaction and itself causes inaction"<sup>318</sup>

Furthermore, compassion fatigue theory has a limit that it is a merely individual approach to the shift between emotion and photographs. Sontag and Moeller's compassion fatigue may be true to one individual but may not be to another; and it can be applied to the individual level, not to the societal. Thus, while compassion fatigue may be viewed by many as a fact, for other critics it is understood to be little more than a myth. 'There may well be a problem with compassion,' Campbell argues, 'but it is not one of a generalized or universal fatigue brought on by repeated exposure to certain kinds of imagery.'<sup>319</sup> On the myth of compassion fatigue, Campbell concludes that 'rendering our capacities solely in terms of compassion – either its excess or lack – is too singular and limited a view.'<sup>320</sup> It is because compassion can only operate at

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<sup>317</sup> Campbell, "The Myth of Compassion Fatigue." 106.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid. 118.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

an individual level:

By itself compassion cannot be the basis for political mobilization because it is limited to a vicarious experience of suffering usually between two individuals (the one suffering and the spectator of that suffering), and can thus only ever deal with the particular rather than the general. As such, framing the problem in terms of either the diminishment or promotion of compassion means we are incapable of generating the move from singular expression to collective actions.<sup>321</sup>

Regardless of compassion fatigue, there is evidence that photography can promote compassion. Even in a conflict situation, certain photographs actually promoted moral feeling and response against war. Liam Kennedy, for example, identifies Larry Burrows, who photographed the Vietnam War, as a compassion-driven photojournalist. Kennedy comments on Burrows:

While Burrows never formulated a coherent narrative of the war, the uneven responses to it reflected in his work are an important documentary chronicle both of the war's shifting contours and of his sensitivities to this. That efforts to make sense of the war and of his own relation to it drew him to "a new sense of concern for a universal humanity" may register a myopia about the geopolitical realities of the conflict and his own position, but also suggest the peculiar tensions he experienced in attempting "to parse landscapes of horror" and create a point of view that reflected the moral ambiguities of his own role.<sup>322</sup>

According to Moeller, war photographers attempt to find pre-framed images or sensational images that often represent the horror of war. Moeller argues that compassion fatigue affects both the media and its audience in war representation and reception. However, Larry Burrows exemplifies just the opposite—that is, Burrows' compassion actually helped him create better photographic representations that provided its audiences with a fresh and better understanding of the reality of the Vietnam War. For Burrows, compassion was a default frame, as Kennedy maintains:

[Burrows] has performed in promoting and sustaining a humanistic perspective on the violence of war and human rights abuses—most particularly by positing compassion as a framing device for the representation

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<sup>321</sup> Ibid. 119.

<sup>322</sup> Liam Kennedy, "A Compassionate Vision: Larry Burrows's Vietnam War Photography," *Photography & Culture* 4, no. 2 (July 2011). 192.

of the suffering or subjugated bodies of distant others—while operating within a political economy of media production skewed to represent the values and interests of dominant Western powers. Often, under these conditions of representation, compassion becomes the default frame that simultaneously invites viewers to engage the horrors via affective responses to agony, yet disengages them by eliding the geopolitical realities of power and violence that underlie the horrors.<sup>323</sup>

Thus far, we have discussed the emotional aspect in the reception of images of atrocities, the concern and myth of compassion fatigue, and compassion as a humanistic frame on violence. While Sontag and Moeller focus on the negative impact of photographic representation of suffering, photography still plays a pivotal role for promoting compassion to the pain of others as we saw in Larry Burrow's case. Then, we could ask: Which photograph promotes compassion and which one not? What makes the difference in its reception? To what extent does photography promote sincere empathy with the suffering of others?

In the next section, I will consider two ways of photographic representation of suffering: the first is the direct representation of physical suffering, and the other is the indirect representation of emotional suffering. My contention is that an indirect way of representation of emotional suffering like grief and loss may often be a better way of promoting compassion. I develop my argument with reference to the social documentary photography in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the United States. By doing so, I will suggest compassionate photography for better understanding of the pain of the victims of the Gwangju Uprising.

### ***3.2 Two Ways of Representation of Victims of the Gwangju Uprising***

#### **3.2.1 Direct and Physical Suffering**

In my view, and as described earlier, there are mainly two ways of photographic representation of victims' suffering: the first is a direct representation of physical suffering and the other is an indirect representation of emotional suffering. We can find examples of the first approach in early war photography (See Chapter 1). The early

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<sup>323</sup> Ibid.

war photographers tried to make the horror of tragic war as realistic as possible. However, early war photography had limits, it merely focused on portraying physical violence, not touching a deeper level of suffering of victims.

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, the use of photography in Ernst Friedrich's *War against War* (1924) is the obvious example of the first approach that emphasizes the direct representation of physical suffering of victims' war.<sup>324</sup> In the photobook, there is a section of "Faces of War" which contains seriously wounded soldiers' faces from the Great War in Germany. Since those *unbearable* images were direct and distinct representations of the pain of the soldiers, they would be shocking to the audience during the time. However, those images, as Sontag and Moller worried, would become gradually familiarized. Moreover, the images of injured faces do not explain who they are, only the seriousness of their wounds. Thus, the images only highlight the physical suffering of the victims. When audiences look at those images, they would feel anger or fear; but not empathy because they do not know who they are and what stories they have.

I found that there is another example of the direct representation of physical suffering related to the Gwangju Uprising. There is a photobook titled "*O-Wol Gwangju*" (the May of Gwangju) which contains striking images of the Gwangju Uprising.<sup>325</sup> Interestingly, there are some parallels between this book and Friedrich's *War against War*. Like the *War against War*, this photobook was first exhibited to the public before publication. The photographs were collected by the Korean Catholic Diocese for Justice and Peace in Gwangju who were actively engaged in the protest against the military regime. In May 1987, they held a public exhibition in front of the Myeongdong Cathedral in Seoul, Korea. Four months later, in September 1987, it was published by them with the title "*O-Wol, When the Days Come Back*". In 1997, it is republished with the new title "*O-Wol Gwangju*".

This book consists of different photographs of the atrocities during the Gwangju Uprising in time sequence with descriptions: 129 black and white images by

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<sup>324</sup> Ernst Friedrich and Douglas Kellner, *War against War* (Seattle: Real Comet Press, 1987 [1924]).

<sup>325</sup> Anonymous contributors, *O-Wol Gwangju* [the May of Gwangju] (Gwangju, South Korea: The Korean Catholic Diocese for Justice and Peace in Gwangju, 1994 [1987]).

photojournalist Na Kyung-taek, 14 captured images from the German magazine *Stern*, and 79 images donated by an “anonymous contributor”. What I like to highlight is the section that contains unbearable images of wounded faces of victims.<sup>326</sup> It is surprisingly analogous with the section “The Faces of War” in the *War against War*. Their faces appear seriously injured and even unrecognizable.

When I first saw the pictures, I was shocked and speechless. Since I could not bear the images, I quickly closed my eyes, turning away my head. It was a visual shock like the “negative epiphany” Sontag mentioned.<sup>327</sup> What would be the impact of those photographs on the audience? Did or do they help promoting compassion for the victims of the images? It may be argued that those photographs succeeded to draw people’s attention to what happened during the days in Gwangju. However, I am doubtful whether the images helped promote compassion for the victims. From my perspective, those images may arouse negative feelings such as fear, fright, and anger but not a sense of compassion.

From a receptive perspective, shock is different from compassion. Giving a shock should be distinguished from promoting compassion. Compassion requires us to have a deeper level of understanding of suffering. Compassion fundamentally occurs on a level of relationship. To sympathise with one’s suffering demands of us a sort of feeling of relationship with him or her. Likewise, to promote compassion for the victims of the Gwangju Uprising, it is required to provide who they are and what they lost. At this point, the role of photography exists—that is, portraying who they are and bringing their stories on the stage.

The unbearable images of *O-Wol Gwangju* would contribute to drawing public attention to the event, but it had a limit in portraying the victims’ deeper suffering such as grief and loss. It is because those images are directly representing the victims’ suffering, simply focusing on physical suffering. I do not attempt to deny the social impact of those photographs that describe the brutality of the military regime. They have their own value no matter how much they are visually horrible. To some degree, in the process of the civil protest against the dictatorship, those photographs would be

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<sup>326</sup> Ibid. 41-47.

<sup>327</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*. 19.

needed. In terms of compassion, however, the way of photographic representation which focused on victims' physical suffering alone seems deficient.

In the next section, I will discuss the second approach that primarily focuses on the emotional suffering of victims.

### 3.2.2 Indirect and Emotional Suffering

While the first approach directly represents victim's physical suffering, the second approach turns to an indirect way of expression of victims' emotional suffering. This approach does not portray physical suffering or violence directly; instead, it seeks to describe victims' emotional suffering, their personal stories, and their social and political context. The image of *A Child with his Father's Portrait* [Fig. 4], for example, does not depict any violence directly, but rather it focuses on a little boy who lost his father. Nevertheless, the picture has a power that has the potential to touch and move the audience.

His facial expression does not convey a singular emotion, rather it brings out broader sensations such as sadness and tiredness. It is perhaps because this little child would not fully realize what has happened to him. His innocent eyes provide a powerful echo to the audience, leading to a fundamental question: "why did such a tragedy has to happen to this little child, and for what end?" Through the contemplative process, the photograph helps the audience have sympathy with the little boy and the other victims that he represents.

The style of the photograph is reminiscent of documentary photography in the 1930s. The close-up image emphasizes the boy's face and arouses an increased emotional response. One of the best examples in this genre is Dorothea Lange's famous photograph, "*Migrant Mother*", which was part of a series of photographs of the Farm Security Administration Collection (FSA) in the 1930s.<sup>328</sup> The face of the migrant mother in Lange's photograph reflects her complex emotions emerging out of the difficult situation that her family had to struggle with in the economic crisis in the 1930s in the United States. Her eyes connote different feelings such as pain and anxiety—maybe about her poverty, as well as hopelessness for the future. The silence

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<sup>328</sup> [http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/128\\_migm.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/128_migm.html) (Accessed 26 November 2017).

of the photograph is more powerful than a thousand words in representation of the life of a (im)migrant woman.

What is a good photograph in representation of suffering? I find the power of photography like Lange's work is mainly rooted in its unique atmosphere whereby the subtle emotion of the photograph speaks volumes, as opposed to more explicit photos. A good photograph is, in this sense, a thing that helps the audience feel empathy with the subject of the photograph. It is particularly related to how a photographer might represent the emotion of a subject. It is also related to a photographer's understanding of the subject.

Although these photographs such as *A Child with his Father's Portrait* and *Migrant Mother* do not describe physical suffering directly, they may help many audience members to have compassion for the victims of the photographs. I found that an indirect and emotional approach to suffering is a distinct characteristic of the 20<sup>th</sup> century social documentary photography. Moreover, the approach has a great deal of value to our discussion how to visually represent the pain of victims for the promotion of compassion, overcoming concerns such as spectatorship desensitization or compassion fatigue. Thus, it is worthwhile to examine in depth how social documentary photography attempted to engage in the pain of others in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the UK and the USA. In what follows, I will briefly discuss two different concepts of documentary photography as *observation* and *engagement*; then, I will consider the history of social documentary photography and its characteristics.

### **3.3 Representations of the Pain of Others in Documentary Photography**

#### **3.3.1 Documentary Photography as Observation (pre-1930s)**

There is long history of photographs being used as documentary style evidence. Understandings of documentary photography can be divided into two concepts: observation and engagement. This division occurred as social documentary photography emerged in the 1930s. Pre-1930s documentary photography focused on the role of recording as photographic evidence. The term *documentary* comes from

“documentum”, a medieval Latin for an official paper.<sup>329</sup> It is a deep but misplaced notion of a camera’s veracity as an agent of recording in the early photography period in the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century. William Clarke notes:

From the beginning the photograph has been understood through its ability to record an objective image of events with an assumed veracity that painting and drawing could never claim with equal authority.<sup>330</sup>

Regarding the role of the camera as an agent of recording, photography provides an irreplaceable quality of evidence of historical events. For example, William Edward Kilburn’s record of the Chartist Meeting on Kensington Common (c.1848), Southworth and Hawes’s Operation Under Ether (c.1852), and the anonymous Communards in their Coffins (c.1871) were taken with the purpose of offering literal historical records to readers who have not seen the events. Documents as evidence provide a “truthful” and “objective” account for an event. In this sense, such images as evidence function as ‘windows into a world otherwise lost and, to that extent, are significantly and appropriately documentary photographs.’<sup>331</sup>

Within this framework, documentary photography emphasized a recording of both fact and event with “objective” eyes through a camera lens, without an emotional attachment or political purpose. Liz Wells relates the documentary genre to the socio-cultural movement as an attempt to look at ordinary life through objective eyes in the 1930s in the UK.<sup>332</sup> The best-known example is the project *Mass Observation*, an anthropological survey of British life. *Mass Observation* conveyed ‘the sense that the world could no longer be taken for granted and understood; that ordinary day-to-day lives needed to be made strange by being examined with the supposedly “impartial” eye of the social scientist.’<sup>333</sup>

Within the goal, the photographers of *Mass Observation* attempted to construct

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<sup>329</sup> Clarke, *The Photograph*. 145.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid. 146.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> Wells, *Photography: A Critical Introduction*. 107.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid. 107-108.



an “accurate” picture of everyday life. In order to do this, they kept their distance from the subject(s). In particular, they tried to be neutral with regard to the political and moral matters of the time. Bert Hardy who worked for *Mass Observation* described his practice in *Camerawork*:

I didn’t think of it politically. I was never a political animal. I mean the journalists had that sort of job to do. I think I just photographed what I saw. I never angled anything.<sup>334</sup>

For photographers like Hardy, it was crucial to exclude a photographer’s perspective or intention in representation of a subject. Instead, they wanted to be “an invisible spy” at the moment of photographing. Humphrey Spender, who photographed working-class life of those days, wrote of his impossible desire:

I had to be an invisible spy – an impossibility which I didn’t particularly enjoy trying to achieve ... I was somebody from another planet intruding on another way of life. ... A constant feature of taking the kind of photograph we’re talking about even when people were unaware that they were actually being photographed – was a feeling that I was exploiting the people I was photographing, even when ... the aim explicitly was to help them.<sup>335</sup>

Spender’s description of himself as alien or spy refers to the opposite understanding of the emotional feature of social documentary photography. For Spender, to get an accurate image of reality requires a social distance, separate from the subject, excluding his own feeling and even good intentions to help them. He believed that any notion or political stance on the workers, even if it was positive, would amount to ‘a consideration of the subjects of representation as potentially exploited by the encounter.’<sup>336</sup> Therefore, for him, documentary photography should be an observation without intrusion or intervention.

The idea of documentary as *observation*, however, brings about serious critical limitations. First, it is ideally aiming to prevent exploitation of a reality; but in reality, it is impossible to exclude a photographer’s engagement in any way. Unlike Hardy, everyone angles as well as looks. Moreover, every photographic image is a result of

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<sup>334</sup> Bert Hardy, *Camerawork 8* (1977). 9.

<sup>335</sup> Humphrey Spender, "Humphrey Spender: M.O. Photographer," *Camerawork 11* (1978). 16.

<sup>336</sup> Wells, *Photography: A Critical Introduction*. 109.

one's looking, framing, and interpretation based on one's experience and (un)consciousness. Second, there is no guarantee that the reception of an image is the same for its audiences; instead, it varies depending on a viewer's background and understanding of the subject and context. Lastly, such voyeuristic representation can be superficial in a way in which it tends to focus on the visual representation without enough understanding of the context. William Clarke points out the limited illusion:

[...] in many contexts the notion of a literal and objective record of 'history' is a limited illusion. It ignores the entire cultural and social background against which the image was taken, just as it renders the photographer a neutral, passive, and invisible recorder of the scene. And perhaps the documentary photograph suffers from this more than any other form of photographic representation. Much of this ambivalence over the veracity of a photograph's status can be traced to the way many early 'documentary' photographers used the camera to expose what would otherwise remain invisible.<sup>337</sup>

Since photographic representation captures a moment of a reality, it is unable to contain the invisible factors such as causes and effects of the context. The essence of photographic representation of reality draws upon a photographer's perception of the social system. Therefore, a better understanding of the context can improve the representation of reality.

### **3.3.2 Documentary Photography as Engagement (post-1930s)**

The other understanding of documentary photography is not simply observing but engaging. This change was incurred by social documentary photographers such as Jacob Riis, Dorothea Lange, and Walker Evans. For social documentary photographers, looking is not a passive but active behavior to understand and change the social problems in their time. Photographic representation of a subject via a camera means a photographer's awareness of the social issues and his or her willingness to try to promote social change. Thus, the function of documentary is its social engagement; a photographer becomes a participant rather than an observer in the process of photography.

Social documentary photography emerged in the belief that social problems

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<sup>337</sup> Clarke, *The Photograph*. 146-147.

like poverty in the 1930s were consequences of the prevailing social system. This belief led a vibrant left wing oppositional practice of radical movement in theatre, film, and photography.<sup>338</sup> The Worker's Film and Photo League (WFPL), for example, used the medium of photography for the purpose of recording their own life and struggles by themselves.<sup>339</sup> More interestingly, they considered the photographic representation to be 'a central part of political struggles' and 'an alternative photographic practice to exemplify those ideas.'<sup>340</sup> For them, it was not important to reveal 'how things looked in the "real world"', but to disrupt the surface appearance of the image in order to construct new meanings out of the old pictorial elements.'<sup>341</sup>

Documentary as *engagement* is evident in the life and work of Jacob Riis, the pioneer of the American social documentary tradition. In *How the Other Half Lives* (1890), Riis focused on and photographed the 'living conditions in New York East Side which revealed the appalling conditions and social deprivation under which a largely immigrant population had to live.'<sup>342</sup> He used a camera as a tool for social change—to educate and reform people's perception of poverty and the social system:

Riis realized there was a limit to the impact words could have. He wanted to shock one half of the city into truly seeing the other half and realizing that the two groups had much in common. One photograph, he believed, could do more to make people of the tenements real to his audience than anything he could write. Using the newly invested flash technology that made it possible for the first to photograph the squalor of the tenements' dark rooms, Riis set out to do what, in one form or another, he spend the rest of his life doing—casting light into darkness.<sup>343</sup>

During this time, documentary was also understood and functioned as a tool of education. Documentary photographs were expected to provide 'facts about the social

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<sup>338</sup> Wells, *Photography : A Critical Introduction*. 111.

<sup>339</sup> The Worker's Film and Photo League (WFPL), known as Film and Photo League, was established in the 1930s in the US. They thought a camera as a weapon for political struggles. For more information, see Russell Campbell, "Film and Photo League: Radical Cinema in the 30s," *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media*, no. 14 (1977).

<sup>340</sup> Wells, *Photography : A Critical Introduction*.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.

<sup>342</sup> Clarke, *The Photograph*. 147.

<sup>343</sup> Janet B. Pascal, *Jacob Riis* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

order that everyone would need in order to play a part in modern society.<sup>344</sup> William Stott, in his book on documentary, suggests how the genre functions as a tool of education:

This is how documentary works. ... It defies comment; it imposes its meaning. It confronts us, the audience, with empirical evidence of such nature as to render dispute impossible and interpretation superfluous. All emphasis is on the evidence; the facts themselves speak ... since just the fact matters, it can be transmitted in any plausible medium. ... The heart of documentary is not form or style or medium, but always content.<sup>345</sup>

Riis did not work alone. He was a good friend of Theodore Roosevelt and American progressive reformers, often called “muckrakers” who were from educated and Christian backgrounds at the time. ‘As police organizations rapidly adopted the camera as a means of evidence’, as Clarke argues, social reformers like Riis sought to ‘educate a middle-class public with images which made visible those areas of their society where injustice and poverty abounded.’<sup>346</sup>

Riis and other reformers contended that ‘poverty was the product of imperfect social and economic systems, and that it could therefore be reduced through increased government regulation of the economy.’<sup>347</sup> To do this, he believed that people’s perception of a society should be changed first. In the biography of *Jacob Riis*, Janet Pascal describes people’s perception of the poor during the period:

Most Americans thought of the poor as lazy and ignorant, inclined to drink, and not interested in cleaning up their living quarters. Certainly they knew, in an abstract way, that the people who lived in the tenements were human beings just like themselves, but they rarely imagined them as neighbours with feelings and hopes, fears and needs as real as their own.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>344</sup> Wells, *Photography : A Critical Introduction*. 107.

<sup>345</sup> William Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973). 14.

<sup>346</sup> Clarke, *The Photograph*. 147. It seems a natural consequence that Riis became interested in photography since he used to work as a police officer before his photographic career. The revision of the police system using photography happened relatively early.

<sup>347</sup> Harvard University Library Open Collections, "Jacob Riis (1849-1914)," in *Immigrations to the United States, 1789-1930*.

<sup>348</sup> Pascal, *Jacob Riis*. 8.

Riis' conception of and approach to the slum can be evaluated as ambivalent.<sup>349</sup> It can be criticized as propagandistic: He utilized a camera for political purposes rather than observation and record. Nevertheless, his photographs gave influence to the social changes in its perception and policy for the poor in New York. Moreover, his usage and style of photography directly influenced and shaped the contemporary documentary genre, and inspired many great photographers of the twentieth century, the so called post-1930s documentary photography.

### 3.3.3 Case Study: Dorothea Lange and the FSA Project

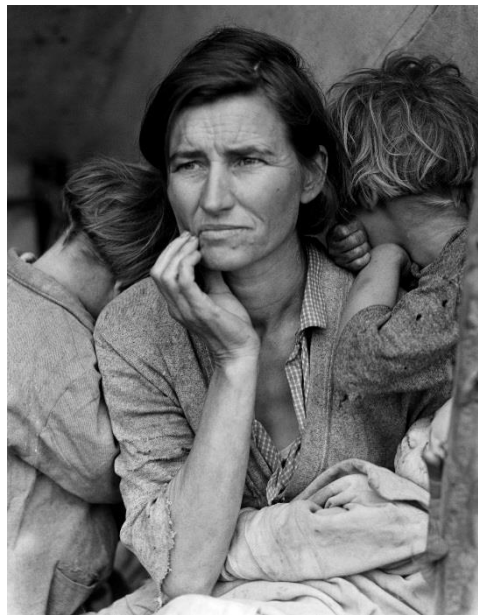


Figure 5. *Migrant Mother*, 1936,  
Dorothea Lange

Beginning in the 1930s, government-funded photography projects on social issues increased. The US Government initiated the biggest photography project, the Farm Security Administration (FSA), for the sake of research and education on the reality of farmers' lives in the economic crisis. For this large-scale project, many photographers

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<sup>349</sup> For instance, Riis work was part of the government project and the way of solution did not overcome the beneficiary model based on the Christian charity. For more information, see Bonnie Yochelson and Daniel J. Czitrom, *Rediscovering Jacob Riis : Exposure Journalism and Photography in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014).

who were influenced by Jacob Riis participated in the project, photographers such as Dorothea Lange, Margaret Bourke-White, Russell Lee, Walker Evans, and Arthur Rothstein.<sup>350</sup>

The FSA was a government-funded project, not an independent one. Hence, the photographers who participated in the project were asked to follow guidelines set out by the government. Initially, the government wanted photographers to show nationalistic images of America at work, and workers rather than the unemployed poor. Once photographers were on the road, however, they were free from the pressure of Washington and often took very different images of impoverished farmers rather than what was expected. The FSA photographs are ‘almost always of individuals and families, and often show them as weary and defenseless.’<sup>351</sup> Clarke describes the emotional effect of these documentary photographs:

They [photographs] evoke images of strain, of mental fatigue, but they also tease out the bonds of affection and connection between people, especially between mothers and children. And of course, they show people on the road, moving out; their possessions packed away, their furniture roped to the tops of cars or heaped on to a rickety truck. [...] Objects do service as carriers of emotion; objects that are stranded, dislocated, treasured though cheap.<sup>352</sup>

This was the natural consequence of the photographer’s encounter with people who were suffering from hardship and poverty. From the close distance, photographers could get a better understanding of the circumstance and became compassionate with them in suffering. In this way, their visual representation through a camera lens did not simply contain a fact but rather evoked complex feelings and empathy in response to the subject.

This is evident in Dorothea Lange’s *Migrant Mother*. For Lange, the encounter with the migrant mother was more than an accident. Later in an article, she recalled it was like a special attraction. During her travel on the road, she had passed members of the family; then, after a while, she decided to go back and photograph

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<sup>350</sup> Dorothea Lange (1895-1965), Walker Evans (1903-1975), Russell Lee (1903-1986), Margaret Bourke-White (1904-1971), and Arthur Rothstein (1915-1985).

<sup>351</sup> Wells, *Photography : A Critical Introduction*. 112.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid.

them:

I saw and approached the hungry and desperate mother, as if drawn by a magnet. I do not remember how I explained my presence or my camera to her but I do remember she asked me no questions. I made five exposures, working closer and closer from the same direction. I did not ask her name or her history...<sup>353</sup>

For Lange, as Clarke argues, the woman is used purely as a subject. Lange would know that she would fit into the symbolic framework of the FSA project. Regardless of the government's intention, Lange had an ideal image in her mind, constructed by her encountering with "them" in suffering. The *Migrant Mother* was both a subject as fact and also a visualized representation constructed by Lange's perspective. In this process, a photographer plays a key role of visual representation of suffering. More importantly, I argue that her encountering with "them" on the road crucially affected her framework of the project. In other words, the *Migrant Mother* is a product of visualization of both her understanding and feeling *with* them.

In this way, Lange produced an iconic representation of the hard life of migrant families in the 1930s. The mother with her children, the absence of the father, and the mother's face gazing somewhere hopelessly create a highly emotional and sentimental mood. 'The woman is viewed', Clarke argues, 'as a symbol larger than the actuality in which she exists.'<sup>354</sup> Through the visual representation of a camera, mainly dependent upon a photographer, the viewers of the photograph are asked to feel *something* the symbol tells:

This is emphasized by the closeness of the camera and the informal stances people are allowed to take up in front of it. We feel that we are not in the presence of representatives of a class, but of ordinary people, much like us, who have fallen on hard times and are doing the best they can in the circumstances. [...] In other words, we are asked to accept that we can make immediate connections between this body of work and our own life and condition; but also that these are photographs which sum up the specific experience of the migrant workers in the USA. We are invited to accept that

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<sup>353</sup> Dorothea Lange, "The Assignment I'll Never Forget," in *Photography: Essays and Images: Illustrated Readings in the History of Photography*, ed. Beaumont Newhall (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1980).

<sup>354</sup> Clarke, *The Photograph*. 153.

these are 'honest' images drawn from life, but are also the product of extraordinarily gifted photographers.<sup>355</sup>

These documentary photographers like Lange both documented the life of farmers in the 1930s as evidence and documented their life and suffering as a symbolic representation. Between the official journalism and documentary, the FSA project produced a new genre of photography. Clark describes their role in visual representation of the nation:

Much of their response has been read as examples of photo-journalism, so that their images are valued as part of both a permanent record of the times, and are equally seen as having an immediate place within the context of the period. They 'reported' visually on the state of the nation.<sup>356</sup>

Their visual representation of the American society of the 1930s, according to Beaumont Newhall, was 'not only to inform us, but to move us.'<sup>357</sup> This is characteristic to appeal to the audience to respond to visual representations of social issues, particularly the suffering. They sought to utilize different mediums with photography and maximize its effect. As John Sirenson has appropriately termed, the work of the FSA often collaborated with a 'dramatic language' or 'emotional language' to enrich the visual rhetoric of the photographic space.<sup>358</sup> We can draw from further evidence: Bourke-White collaborating with Taylor Caldwell created a phrase "*You Have Seen Their Faces*" in the 1937 pamphlet; "*Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*" (1941) was made by James Agee, with photographs by Walker Evans. This direct and powerful message was intended for the audience to be moved and respond to the subject.

Since the 1930s, the documentary photography style has been dominant, in many ways, in twentieth century photojournalism.<sup>359</sup> In the tradition, photographers seek to raise social issues and changes via their photographs. They wanted to change the audience's thoughts and mind as well as their actions. For this reason, they focused

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<sup>355</sup> Wells, *Photography: A Critical Introduction*. 113-114.

<sup>356</sup> Clarke, *The Photograph*. 148-149.

<sup>357</sup> Ibid. 149.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid.

<sup>359</sup> It would be meaningless to distinguish two genres, unless comparing their production systems.



on emotional aspects of social change. Most of great photographers of the twentieth century have sought to help those suffering under poverty and violence. Some photographs succeed to promote compassion with “them” in suffering; while some photographs failed. Those photographs in the latter are often too emotional and sensational for the audience to sympathize with “them”.

Photographic representations of suffering and its reception might be voyeuristic and produce public numbness, apathy at another’s pain. However, it can be the opposite as we see in Lange’s *Migrant Mother*. It has significance in several ways: first, it represents the migrant mother’s suffering realistically so that its audiences can understand her pain by looking, feeling, and imagining; secondly, it shows Lange’s embedded understanding of the mother’s pain so that the audience can have a better understanding of “the other” in distance, not just information; and finally, Lange’s photograph symbolizes the pain of the migrant mothers during the time collectively beyond the single representation.

On the basis of the discussion so far, it is useful to highlight how compassionate photography can draw upon a photographer’s embedded experience with suffering. By being with them in proximity, Lange could be engaged in the migrant mother’s life and get deeper understanding of suffering. Particularly, the mother’s face contains her life stories and evokes complicated feelings—which are not easy to articulate by words. Through the representation, the photograph played a pivotal role for promoting compassion not only for the migrant mother individually but also the other migrant mothers and their families.

### **3.4 Christian Perspective on Suffering and Empathy**

Throughout the conversation between photography and the suffering, I found that the relational approach is the key for promoting empathy. It is because empathy only occurs between people such as a photographer, a victim, and the audience. One role of photography is to mediate, and thereby enrich relations by providing nuanced visual representations of suffering. My argument is that photography can promote empathy even more effectively when it goes beyond simply showing physical suffering to focus on relational and emotional suffering. For Christians, concerned with helping to restore

fractured relationships, it is useful to reflect further on how to engage with the representation of human suffering and the theological questions that emerge in this context. In the next section, I therefore consider two different Christian perspectives that provide complementary insights into ways of reflecting theologically on engaging with the pain of others.

### 3.4.1 Moltmann's Suffering God

The first perspective is to be found in the work of the German theologian Jürgen Moltmann. He is arguably one of the most influential European figures who have worked on theological engagement with human suffering in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In his volume *The Crucified God* (1974), Moltmann seeks to answer the difficult question of human suffering incurred by tragic events such as disaster and conflict.<sup>360</sup> In his autobiography (2007), he writes two personal rationales why he had come to write *The Crucified God*. His first life-experience occurred when he was 17 years old. He had witnessed the fire devastation that took 40,000 people's lives away in Hamburg, Germany in 1943. The other reason was Auschwitz. As a German theologian, he struggled and engaged with the question:

The annihilations which I witnessed in one or the other way extended not only to human beings, to victims and perpetrators; for me it reached into the depths of God himself. For me the question of God became the cry for justice uttered by the victims of those mass annihilations.<sup>361</sup>

*The Crucified God* is often called a Christian "theology after Auschwitz" but Moltmann preferred to explain that the volume is "a book about belief in God after the crucifixion of Christ". He struggles to find an answer from Christ on Golgotha and Christ's death cry.

What we dare to say about God "after Auschwitz" surely depends on what we can say about God after the event on Golgotha, and the way we talk about God when we hear the echo of Christ's death cry: "My God, why have you forsaken me?" The whole book can be understood as an attempt to wrestle theologically

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<sup>360</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1974). Also see his journal article "The Crucified God," *Theology Today* 31, no. 1 (1974).

<sup>361</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *A Broad Place: An Autobiography* (London: SCM Press, 2007). 191.

with that death cry. There is something in it which links every theology of the cross with the apocalyptic expectation of the future: if Christ's suffering manifests God's own suffering, then that suffering cannot be infinite or endless.

Moltmann finds God's comfort and compassion for the suffering through the crucified Christ, 'the Suffering God'. For him, the key understanding of Christ is the "suffering God" on the cross. The cross of Christ has been centered in his theological inquiry. The crucified God means God is like us "true men" who suffered like us:

God became man that dehumanized men might become true men. We become true men in the community of the incarnate, the suffering and the loving, the human God.<sup>362</sup>

What he suffered means not only God suffers like us, but he knows our suffering. This is significant in the way in which the persons of the Trinity exemplify their loving relationship.

Moltmann's Christology, particularly the concept of the suffering God, was criticized by contemporary theologians in regard to the nature of God such as the immutability of God (Karl Rahner, Johan Baptist Metz, and Hans Küng)<sup>363</sup> and the brutality of God (Dorothee Sölle).<sup>364</sup> There is room for different interpretations or receptions about the God's nature, whether God is able to suffer or not. However, if God is immutable but stands separately from human suffering, it is "comfortless". He argues, 'I cannot find any "theology" in this silence'.<sup>365</sup>

Moltmann's post-war theology, rooted in an understanding of the "suffering God", takes our understanding of suffering into a deeper level. The passion of Christ can be often perceived as being focused on his physical suffering; but Moltmann rather focuses on the relational suffering as being rejected and abandoned by God.

When God becomes man in Jesus of Nazareth, he not only enters into the finitude of man, but in his death on the cross also enters into the situation of

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<sup>362</sup> *The Crucified God the Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, ed. R. A. Wilson and John Bowden, Gekreuzigte Gott (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993). 231.

<sup>363</sup> Moltmann, *A Broad Place : An Autobiography*. 197-200.

<sup>364</sup> Robin CP Ryan, *God and the Mystery of Human Suffering: A Theological Conversation across the Ages* (NJ: Paulist Press, 2016). See Chapter 7.

<sup>365</sup> Moltmann, *A Broad Place : An Autobiography*. 198.

man's godforsakenness. In Jesus he does not die the natural death of a finite being, but the violent death of the criminal on the cross, the death of complete abandonment by God. The suffering in the passion of Jesus is abandonment, rejection by God, his Father.<sup>366</sup>

Moltmann's perspective can be connected to our discussion: What is the Christian response to the pain of others, particularly to the victims of the Gwangju Uprising and the little mourner? They may ask: "Why did it happen and why should we suffer?" Then, the church can say: God knows your suffering as he suffered on the cross; God is suffering there in the victims themselves; and God also knows that your suffering is much deeper than physical suffering, your loss with your father.

### **3.4.2 Oh, Gwangju! The Cross of Our Nation!**

The second perspective is to be found in the work of a Korean poet: Kim Jun-tae (1948-present). Kim Jun-tae is a Korean poet and Catholic activist who witnessed the annihilations in Gwangju and played a leading role in negotiating with the Chun regime during the uprising. He wrote a famous poem, "Oh, Gwangju! The Cross of Our Nation!". This poem was widely read and used by pro-democratic activists, especially for mourning for those who died during the massacre. Here are selected phrases of the poem:

Where has our father gone? Where has our mother collapsed? Where has our Son died and "been buried? And, where does our Daughter lie dead, her mouth gaping? Where have our soul and spirit gone, torn and broken into pieces?

Gwangju, which both God and birds have left!

Our blood-covered city where decent people are still alive, morning and evening, collapsing, falling down, and rising again!

Oh, Gwangju, Gwangju who carries the cross of this nation, climbing over Mudeung Mountain, and walks over the hill of Golgotha! Oh, the son of God, whose whole body is covered with wounds, and who is the emblem of death!

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<sup>366</sup> *The Crucified God the Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*. 276.

Are we really quite dead? Dead, unable to love this country any more, unable to love our children anymore? Are we absolutely dead?<sup>367</sup>

The poet describes the loss of one's family as communal loss, saying "our" father and mother, son and daughter. The suffering is as if "soul and spirit" is torn and broken into pieces because it was originally one and united in harmony as God in trinity. Hence, Gwangju was not an ordinary place of the past but became a place of curse, a "blood-covered city". The poet says, "both God and birds have left!" and recalls the hill of Golgotha. The poet's cry sounds overlapping with Christ's cry on Golgotha: "My God, why have you forsaken me?" Kim Jun-tae's poem was not merely poem but represented the victim's soul and spirit, their cry and prayer regarding the suffering for the Gwangju Uprising.

By referencing the suffering God and crucified God on Golgotha, who experiences abandonment, Kim Jun-tae also emphasizes how the victim's pain is not simply physical suffering but also relational and emotional suffering. In the light of both Kim Jun-tae's poetry and Moltmann's theological reflection it is possible to argue that true compassion cannot exist outside of authentic relationship. Just as God came to us as a human being and suffered with us, so the church should be *with* the victims, mourning and suffering with them.<sup>368</sup> I would argue that the church can contribute to promoting compassion by actively engaging into the tragic event. By being with them, the church can be a space for them as a listener to understand their stories.

In the following section, I return to the photograph *The Child with his Father's Portrait* [Fig. 4] and consider his life and suffering.

### **3.5 The Story of the "Little Chief Mourner"**

Why is the emotional approach significant to building peace? It is because this approach focuses on a victim's personal story. It is the role of photojournalism that provides a better understanding of a victim's suffering based on one's story. By focusing one's narrative, photography helps the audience engage in the victim's pain

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<sup>367</sup> Anonymous contributors, *O-Wol Gwangju*. 41-45.

<sup>368</sup> See Samuel Wells, *A Nazareth Manifesto: Being with God*. (Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2015).

in depth. The image of *The Child with his Father's Portrait* is the example that shows how photojournalism based on the emotional approach can contribute to peacebuilding in the way in which it evokes compassion for the child, by focusing on his personal story, not merely portraying his physical suffering.

The photograph became one of the symbolic images that represent the Gwangju Uprising, particularly the victims and their grief. When I saw the image, different feelings and thoughts arose in my mind: Who is this boy? How old is he? Does he have a sibling and family? Did he understand the situation? How would he feel and remember the day after time passed? How could he bear all the suffering and why should he? Fear, anger, grief and despair emerged in mind. Another question came up: how is he doing now? What would his life after the event be like? Hence, I searched media coverage on him and found interesting news articles.

The child's name is Cho Cheon-ho. He was four years old at the time and his father's name was Cho Sa-cheon. Instead of his name, he was called the "little chief mourner" in the media.<sup>369</sup> The chief mourner refers to the eldest son of the dead who takes a representative role for a funeral ceremony. The expression of the little chief mourner implies the cultural perception of the child who lost his father by the political violence during the uprising.

In an interview with the Korean daily newspaper, *Hangyeoreh*, the little chief mourner Cho Cheon-ho recalled the time of the group funeral:

It [the memory] is vague now. I was hungry rather than sad at the time. I was exhausted because I was too hungry. That is why I rested on the picture frame.<sup>370</sup>

His answer that he was hungry and exhausted sounded more pathetic than he was sad. For the four-year old boy, hunger would be more real than sadness and death. He was too young and innocent to realize the depth of the pain of what he lost. Perhaps, it would be why the boy's face evokes complex feelings.

Surprisingly, he did not know that he was photographed, and his picture was

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<sup>369</sup> Selected reports are *The Hangyeoreh* (18 May 2010), *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* (15 May 2005), *The Chosun Ilbo* (24 November 2006) and MBC News (26 November 2006).

<sup>370</sup> Ahn Gwang-ok, "The Little Chief Mourner, Cho Cheon-Ho: "Resting on the Frame Because I Was Too Tired", *Hangyeoreh* 18 May 2010. (Accessed 18 November 2017)

circulated widely until someone showed it to him in 1987.<sup>371</sup> His relationship with the photograph was bittersweet: On the one hand, he appreciated that the photograph represented the victims' suffering of the uprising. On the other hand, however, he confessed that his grandmother had died from shock after she had realized that the photograph was circulated by people. The memory, for both him and his grandmother, was a painful memory like a trauma. Because of the photograph, he has been subject to public interest. He once said, "I want to be free from the May 18".<sup>372</sup> How difficult would his life have been? Reading the interviews, I can only imagine his grief and suffering, and his life. Through his story, I learn that the Gwangju Uprising is not a past event but continues until today in the victims' heart, memory, and life after the event.

When the media focuses on a tragic event, photography dramatizes it by capturing the moment. When photography captures the four-year old boy who just lost his father, it became a symbolic representation of other victims and their suffering. Simultaneously, it also captured him as a little chief mourner in the aftermath. The stereotyped image as the little chief mourner would be another pain or burden that Cho Cheon-ho has had to bear through his life. This is why a careful approach is required in photographic representations of suffering.

As I look at the image repeatedly and get to know more about his story, I reached to a conclusion: "they" (the victims) are like "us" who do not deserve to suffer, but perhaps human suffering is inevitable. He was one of the victims of the uprising but he deserves to live his own life free from the burden of victimhood. I found that *The Hangeoreh* had highlighted his life through a series of reports from his youth, college graduation, and marriage.<sup>373</sup> After graduating from college, Cho Cheon-ho began to work at the May 18<sup>th</sup> National Cemetery in Mangwol-dong, Gwangju. Among

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<sup>371</sup> Since 1987, the political mood in Korea has been dramatically changed. From that time, democratic groups started to share photographs of the Gwangju Uprising, including the photograph [Fig. 4].

<sup>372</sup> Bae Myung-jae, "25 Years after the Gwangju Uprising: The Little Chief Mourner, Cho Cheon-Ho," *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* 15 May 2005. (Accessed 15 November 2017)

<sup>373</sup> *The Hangeoreh* (23 November 2006; 14 May 1998; 15 May 1988) and *The Hangeoreh* 21 (27 May 1999). You can find the related news at this link at [http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society\\_general/173784.html](http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society_general/173784.html) (Accessed 18 December 2017)

the media coverages on Cho Cheon-ho, the most distinctive news was about his marriage on 23 November 2006.<sup>374</sup> The news of his marriage had lots of meanings both for him and Korean society who knew about him. Although the little chief mourner's role was crying for his loss, a groom's role would be to smile for his new family. He is not a little chief mourner any more but would be a father of his family.<sup>375</sup>

### 3.6 Conclusion

“Emotional photography” is a distinguished style of social documentary photography in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It helps an audience to have empathy with the “them” in a photograph(s). By focusing on the emotional aspect of a subject, often the socially marginalized, these photographs have played significant roles of not only representing the reality of society but raising social awareness. Photographers often enter into the community of a subject and spend time *with* them. By being *with* them, the photographers came to a better understanding of the situation and sympathize with them. From the embedded experience of being *with* them, great photographers of the twentieth century like Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans, Lewis Hine, Robert Capa, Henri Cartier-Bresson, and Sebastiao Salgado came to the world and inspired many viewers with their photographs.<sup>376</sup>

Empathy (or compassion) is a key moral capacity for peacebuilding that summons their moral sense and also a responsibility for ending violence. In this transformative process, emotion can play a pivotal role. As we discussed so far, we can reach some conclusions: first, photographic representation of suffering can touch and move its audience's moral feeling; second, critics have concern about the negative impacts, so called compassion fatigue, of photographic representations of suffering because it may result in public numbness to the pain of others; third, however, unlike the concerns of critics, the compassion fatigue theory is not evident in fact and limited

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<sup>374</sup> *The Hangeoreh* (23 November 2006); *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* (23 November 2006); *The Chosun Ilbo* (24 November 2006); and MBC News (26 November 2006).

<sup>375</sup> Although I could not find any information about his family after his marriage, I guess and wish that he manages his life as a husband and a father.

<sup>376</sup> Dorothea Lange (1895-1965), Walker Evans (1903-1975), Lewis Hine (1874-1940), Robert Capa (1913-1954), Henri Cariter-Bresson (1908-2004), and Sebastiao Salgado (1944-present)



as individual and simplistic approach to the complex dynamics between photography and morality; fourth, on the other hand, there are many cases that photography helps the audience emphasize with the other's pain such as social documentary photography; fifth, the photograph of the little child clutching his father's portrait [Fig.2] is another evidence that the photograph represented the child's grief and played as a symbol of the victims of the Gwangju Uprising; and finally, along with photographic representation, the act of looking can be a critical practice for building peace so that the church as the audience of the images of other's suffering should be actively engaging in the life of those in suffering.

## CHAPTER 4. RESISTING VIOLENCE NONVIOLENTLY



Figure 6. Professors of Chonnam National University lead a march of students toward Geumnam Street to attend Grand Rally for Democratization. 16 May 1980 / Photo by Na Kyung-taek

In this image [Fig. 6], hundreds of protesters are marching on the street. The parade appears surprisingly in order. They are occupying only the half side of the road, while cars are still running on the other half. Everything seems under control and well managed. The participants of the march appear calm and sober. It might even be interpreted as like a sacred ritual, like a funeral procession. They do not appear to be rioters. There is no violent action at least in the photograph. Everything is evidently in good order and the march looks particularly peaceful.

The major participants of the protest are students at Chonnam National University who were one of the most active groups who involved in the Gwangju Uprising. At the bottom of the picture, a big banner reveals that the march was planned by the Chonnam National University Student Council. The other banners following

the line show their own slogans made by different school departments. For example, the banner in the middle is made by the College of Agriculture, claiming “Stop making farmers cry any longer”.<sup>377</sup> What is noticeable is that a group of men wearing suits and ties in the frontline are professors of Chonnam National University. In the Korean context of 1980, university professors were highly respected in society and their social influence was strong. Their participation itself would contribute to the justification of the protest for Korean democratization.

They were attending the Grand (National) Rally for Democratization in Gwangju which had happened for three days in a row in different cities of South Korea. The slogan “*minjok minjuhwa seonghoe*” is translated to the Grand Rally for Democratization in English, but it literally means “the holy assembly for national democratization” which sounds more religious. As observed earlier, the march seems not only calm and sober but also sacred like a funeral or a religious procession. It is particularly because of nonviolence of the march. In my view, the photograph [Fig. 6] represents a moment of nonviolent protests for Korean democratization which happened on the 16<sup>th</sup> May in the city of Gwangju in 1980. It was only two days before the Gwangju massacre occurred. By comparison, the image makes a striking contrast to the violent images during the massacre.

This particular image is reminiscent of the Selma-to-Montgomery March in 1965. The march was organized by nonviolent activists and protesting for racial justice in the US. The protesters were marching on highway from Selma, Alabama to Montgomery peacefully, holding hands together and holding big American National flags. In particular, Martin Luther King Jr. who was one of the major leaders of the march raised the social issues that Black voters faced and the need for a national Voting Rights Act. His speech along with the march made a huge influence to the American civil right movements. More importantly, the march was planned and practiced nonviolently although it turned into America’s “Bloody Sunday”.<sup>378</sup>

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<sup>377</sup> Pro-democracy activists commonly understood the aim of democratization was not only to end the military dictatorship but also to build a just society which includes farmers’ rights as well as labor rights.

<sup>378</sup> See “Selma to Montgomery March Photographs” in the Digital Collection of Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH), <http://digital.archives.alabama.gov/cdm/selection/collection/photo/>;

A similar pattern happened during the Gwangju Uprising. A series of protests during the days of May 1980 were principally planned as nonviolent protest as we saw in the photograph [Fig. 6]. However, on 18 May, the situation was dramatically changed, and the brutal massacre had begun. Although there were physical conflicts and violent resistance between protesters and the government during the Gwangju Uprising, it is still worth asking how to resist peaceably against violence. What is nonviolence and how does it relate to building peace? Should Korean Christians continue to promote and practice nonviolence? And if so, why? How does Christianity contribute to teaching and practicing nonviolent resistance to violence? And lastly, how does photography contribute to promoting nonviolent resistance?

I will not argue which one, either violent and nonviolent resistance, is morally right. Instead, I will highlight the potential of nonviolent resistance, by focusing on the concept of “civil resistance”. This chapter mainly consists of three parts: In the first part, I discuss the theory of civil resistance and its social effectiveness for building peace. In the following part, I suggest photography as a medium of civil resistance, with the case study of Koh Myung-jin’s photograph “Ah! My Fatherland”. In my last part, I will investigate theological meanings of nonviolence, drawing on the work of John Howard Yoder, Walter Wink, and Miroslav Volf. I begin by briefly looking at the concept of “civil resistance”.

## **4.1 Theory and Practice of Civil Resistance**

### **4.1.1 Concept of Civil Resistance**

The concept of “civil resistance” is a form of political campaign and a tool of political communication. Its importance and potential in peace studies is connected to the theory and practice of “nonviolence”. Civil resistance is ‘the sustained used of methods of nonviolent action by civilians engaged in asymmetric conflicts with opponents not averse to using violence to defend their interests.’ It ‘has occurred

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and “Civil Rights March from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama” in the digital archives of the Library of Congress <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002707990/> (Accessed on 5 July 2018)

throughout history by groups resisting various forms of oppression and injustice.<sup>379</sup>

Adam Roberts provides a brief definition regarding the concepts of civil resistance:

Civil resistance is a type of political action that relies on the use of non-violent methods. It is largely synonymous with certain terms, including “non-violent action”, “non-violent resistance”, and “people power”. It involves a range of widespread and sustained activities that challenge a particular power, force, policy, or regime—hence the term “resistance.” The adjective “civil” in this context, denotes that which pertains to a citizen or society, implying that a movement’s goals are “civil” in the sense of being widely shared in a society; and it denotes that the action concerned is non-military or non-violent in character.<sup>380</sup>

Non-violent action in this context means ‘taking action that goes beyond normal institutionalized political methods (voting, lobbying, letter writing, verbal expression) without injuring opponents.’<sup>381</sup> This mode of political action, as Roberts argues, has influenced the shaping of the today’s world in many countries.<sup>382</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Theoretical Approach

Literature on civil resistance commonly takes one of two approaches: one is theoretical and the other is strategic. The literature in the first group explores the theoretical roots of civil resistance such as a historical approach to a religious or political leader of nonviolent resistance.<sup>383</sup> The other group of research, relevantly recent, focuses on

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<sup>379</sup> Kurt Schock, "The Practice and Study of Civil Resistance," *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 3 (2013). 277.

<sup>380</sup> Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton Ash, *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-Violent Action from Gandhi to the Present* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). Introduction. 2.

<sup>381</sup> Bob Irwin and Gordon Faison, "Why Nonviolence? Introduction to Nonviolence Theory and Strategy," (1978 [revised in 1983]), <https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/resource/why-nonviolence-introduction-to-nonviolence-theory-and-strategy/>. 2.

<sup>382</sup> Roberts and Garton Ash, *Civil Resistance and Power Politics : The Experience of Non-Violent Action from Gandhi to the Present*. 1.

<sup>383</sup> April Carter, "People Power and Protest: The Literature on Civil Resistance in Historical Context," in *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-Violent Actions from Gandhi to the Present*, ed. Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton Ash (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). Carter provides a useful literature review on civil resistance and two annotated bibliographies such as April Carter, Howard Clark, and Michael Randle, *People Power and Protest since 1945: A Bibliography of Nonviolent Action* (London: Housmans Bookshop, 2006).; and Roland M. McCarthy and Gene Sharp, *Nonviolent Action: A Research Guide* (New York: Garland, 1997).

why civil resistance works in a political struggle and how it should be approached strategically.<sup>384</sup> Sometimes these approaches merge together.

Although research in the field has been developed recently, the idea of non-violence can be traced far back into history. The term civil resistance or non-violence was not used until the twentieth century; instead, the term “pacifism” had been used to debate a means of struggles. The religious roots of pacifism can be found in the Mennonites and Anabaptists, Quakers, Buddhists, and Hindus. Politically, the idea was developed and spread as terms like “civil disobedience” and “nonviolent resistance” by writers like Henry Thoreau and Leo Tolstoy.<sup>385</sup>

The best known examples of civil resistance would be Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. who stressed and practiced nonviolent resistance. Gandhi carried non-violent resistance campaigns in South Africa in 1906-14 and in India in 1919-48. His experimental life, so-called *satyagraha* (truth force or soul force), became a turning point for civil resistance as a symbolic exemplar that has inspired many practitioners to live their own lives as a form of nonviolent struggle (Bondurant, 1988; Fischer, 1989; Iyer, 2000; Roberts & Galton, 2009; Lelyveld, 2011; Dalton, 2012 & 1996).<sup>386</sup> Kurt Schock views Gandhi’s contribution to civil resistance as below:

Significantly, Gandhi moved beyond individual civil disobedience and realized that nonviolent resistance could be carried out in collective campaigns to confront societal injustices, from the local to the national level. He also introduced a much greater attention to strategy and tactics in campaigns of mass defiance. Moreover, Gandhi clearly moved beyond the pragmatic use of nonviolent resistance as practiced in nationalist and labor struggles, made a conscious association between mass political action and the

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<sup>384</sup> It will be reviewed later in the section “Strategic Approach”.

<sup>385</sup> Irwin and Faison, "Why Nonviolence? Introduction to Nonviolence Theory and Strategy." 3.

<sup>386</sup> Schock, "The Practice and Study of Civil Resistance." 278. For more information, see Dennis Dalton, *Mahatma Gandhi : Nonviolent Power in Action* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Joseph Lelyveld, *Great Soul : Mahatma Gandhi and His Struggle with India*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011); Roberts and Garton Ash, *Civil Resistance and Power Politics : The Experience of Non-Violent Action from Gandhi to the Present*; Raghavan Narasimhan Iyer, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, Oxford India Paperbacks (New Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Gandhi and Dennis Dalton, *Mahatma Gandhi : Selected Political Writings* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub. Co., 1996); Robert A. Bode, "Gandhi's Theory of Nonviolent Communication," *Gandhi Marg* 16, no. 1 (1994); Louis Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, Collector's ed. (Norwalk, CT: Easton Press, 1989); Joan V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict*, New rev. ed., Princeton Paperbacks (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

ideal of nonviolence, and emphasized nonviolent discipline.<sup>387</sup>

Likewise, in 1955-1968, the civil rights movement against racism led by Martin Luther King Jr. dramatized the influence in spreading the importance of civil resistance in a mass political struggle across the world.<sup>388</sup> From the mid-twentieth century, civil resistance movements occurred in many developed countries such as the anti-Vietnam war movement in the US and Australia, and the student and worker insurrection in France in 1968; a wave of pro-democracy movements from the 1980s into the 21<sup>st</sup> century through the world; and non-violent struggles against dictatorships in the Philippines (1986), Chile (1988), Poland (1989), East Germany (1989), Czech (1989), South Africa (1994), Serbia (2000), and Tunisia and Egypt (2011).<sup>389</sup>

The research on civil resistance has been reinterpreted and developed in a Western context after the Cold War period. It is considered a contributing factor in the ending of Communist Party rule and the Cold War in many countries particularly in the late twentieth century.<sup>390</sup> In 1978, Bob Irwin and Gordon Faison introduced the theory and strategy of non-violent actions as a means of alternative political action to resist military dictatorship in the Philippines and communist regimes in Poland and Eastern Europe.<sup>391</sup>

Recent interest in civil resistance has been growing in moral reflections in regard to the use of violence as a political act. Passing through World War II, there occurred nonviolent campaigns and anti-war movements, particularly against nuclear weapons and the Vietnam War during the 1960-70s. Noam Chomsky's 1967 essay "The Legitimacy of Violence as a Political Act?" provides a glimpse of the public concerns on the matter of anti-war and nonviolence at the time.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of December, 1967, Noam Chomsky was invited to a panel discussion with Hannah Arendt, Susan Sontag, and others on the issue of the American

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<sup>387</sup> Schock, "The Practice and Study of Civil Resistance."

<sup>388</sup> Ibid. 278-279.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid.

<sup>390</sup> Carter, "People Power and Protest: The Literature on Civil Resistance in Historical Context." 27.

<sup>391</sup> See Irwin and Faison, "Why Nonviolence? Introduction to Nonviolence Theory and Strategy." I see the 1987 June Uprising in Korea as one of them.

intervention in Vietnam.<sup>392</sup> During the discussion, Chomsky defended the anti-Vietnam War position and the principle of nonviolence. It appears he understood the critiques on pacifism or nonviolent actions as too idealistic. It is interesting to note that he persuaded other members of the panel and the audience by appealing to the necessity of an optimistic view to a nonviolent and peaceful future.

A couple of days ago I was rather despairingly trying to think of something illuminating that I might say about this subject, and I decided to turn back to some of Tolstoy's essays on civil disobedience. I'm not sure I found anything very deep there, but I was surprised to discover a note of optimism that I hadn't expected, and, since that's a kind of a rare treasure these days, I'd like to quote a couple of remarks just to relieve the prevailing gloom. He has an interesting essay that was written in 1897 called "The Beginning of the End" [audience laughter] in which he points out that until recently men could not imagine a human society without slavery. Similarly, one cannot imagine the life of man without war.<sup>393</sup>

The debate in 1967 and Chomsky's appeal toward optimism represent the atmosphere and concern of the contemporary society on the subject. Until that time, civil resistance and nonviolent actions remained a moral principle or religious belief. On the other hand, most citizens might be concerned about the effectiveness of nonviolent methods as a political act. Scholars of civil resistance, therefore, started to ask whether nonviolent campaigns are actually (in)effective as an alternative to violent political struggles.

#### 4.1.3 Strategic Approach

The second aspect of civil resistance, other than the theoretical approach, mainly focuses on the methods of nonviolent actions and its effectiveness. It is argued that the use of violence is acceptable for the sake of reducing greater evils.<sup>394</sup> In extreme cases

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<sup>392</sup> See for detail at Noam Chomsky, "The Legitimacy of Violence as a Political Act?," (15 December 1967), <https://chomsky.info/19671215/>. (Accessed 15 June 2016)

<sup>393</sup> Ibid.

<sup>394</sup> The most famous examples would be the debates between M. K. Gandhi and F. Fanon and between M. L. King Jr. and Malcom X. For Gandhi and Fanon, see Samuel Farber, "Violence and Material Class Interests: Fanon and Gandhi," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 16, no. 3-4 (1981); Neil Howard, "Freedom and Development in Historical Context: A Comparison of Gandhi and Fanon's Approaches to Liberation.(Mohandas Gandhi and Frantz Fanon)(Critical Essay)," *Journal of Pan African Studies* 4, no. 7 (2011). Hira Singh, "Confronting Colonialism and Racism: Fanon and



like under Hitler's regime or Stalin's, scholars often assume, violent methods of resistance would be more effective.<sup>395</sup> Some scholars even argue that 'terrorism is an effective strategy, particularly in forcing democratic regimes to make territorial concessions.'<sup>396</sup> Contrary to these arguments, recent research shows that the success rate of violent resistance is distinctly lower than non-violent resistance.

Through the analysis of 323 cases from 1900 to 2006 of major nonviolent and violent campaigns, Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan have produced significant findings. That is, non-violent methods of civil resistance have been shown to be more effective in terms of mobilization, resilience, and leverage effect.<sup>397</sup> From 2000 to 2006, for example, a considerable number of civil groups successfully employed nonviolent methods in their struggles such as in Serbia (2000), Madagascar (2002), Georgia (2003), and Ukraine (2004-5), Lebanon (2005), and Nepal (2006).<sup>398</sup>

These cases have shown surprising results in relation to the effectiveness of civil resistance. For example, Chenoweth and Stephan explain why civil resistance strategically works for two reasons. First, they focus on a "backfire" phenomenon when nonviolent campaigns are being suppressed:

In backfire, an unjust act—often violent repression—recoils against its originators, often resulting in the breakdown of obedience among regime supporters, mobilization of the population against the regime, and international condemnation of the regime. [...] Backfire leads to power shifts by increasing the internal solidarity of the resistance campaign, creating dissent and conflicts among the opponent's supporters, increasing external support for the resistance campaign, and decreasing external support for the

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Gandhi," *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 5, no. Special Issue (2007). And For King Jr. and Malcom X, see David Howard-Pitney, *Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and the Civil Rights Struggle of the 1950s and 1960s: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004); Allan Boesak, *Coming in out of the Wilderness : A Comparative Interpretation of the Ethics of Martin Luther King Jr. And Malcolm X* (Kampen: J.H. Kok in opdracht van de Theologische Hogeschool van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, 1977).

<sup>395</sup> Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict," *International Security* 33, no. 1 (2008). 10-11.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid. 10.

<sup>397</sup> *Why Civil Resistance Works : The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*, Columbia Studies in Terrorism and Irregular Warfare (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

<sup>398</sup> Chenoweth and Stephan, "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict." 7-8.

opponent.<sup>399</sup>

Repressing nonviolent resistance results in strengthening the solidarity of protesters both internally and externally. Internally, because of nonviolent ways of resistance, members of a regime 'are more likely to shift loyalty toward nonviolent opposition groups than toward violent opposition groups,' and 'to consider the negative political and personal consequences of using repressive violence against unarmed demonstrators than against armed insurgents.'<sup>400</sup>

In this way, civil resistance promotes strong public mobilization because nonviolent protests have a lower barrier to the public than violent protests. The key of success of civil resistance is whether a campaign grows to a collective or national level of demonstration. High participation is necessary. Thus, 'nonviolent resistance campaigns have been associated with higher levels of participation,' as Chenoweth and Stephan argue, because 'the physical, informational, and moral barriers to participation are lower in nonviolent campaigns than in violent campaigns.'<sup>401</sup>

Moreover, civil resistance is more effective because nonviolent campaigns have more open chances of conversation and negotiation than violent campaigns. It is important that nonviolent protesters are considered not to be a threat to the public or a regime. Recent research shows why nonviolent campaigns may be more appealing to the mass public and more persuasive to regime supporters:

First, public support is crucial to any resistance, but publics view nonviolent campaigns as physically nonthreatening and violent campaigns as threatening. Nonviolent campaigns appear more amenable to negotiation than violent

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<sup>399</sup> Ibid. 11. 'These dynamics are more likely to occur when an opponent's violence is not met with violent counterreprisals by the resistance campaign and when this is communicated to internal and external audiences.' Anders Boserup and Andrew Mack, *War without Weapons : Non-Violence in National Defence* (London: Francis Pinter, 1974). 84. 'Other scholars have noted that a combination of sustained confrontation with the opponent, the maintenance of nonviolent discipline, and the existence of a sympathetic audience are necessary conditions to trigger ju-jitsu.' See Brian Martin and Wendy Varney, "Nonviolence and Communication," *Journal of Peace Research* 40, no. 2 (March 2003).

<sup>400</sup> Chenoweth and Stephan, "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict." 11-12.

<sup>401</sup> *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. 34. According to Chenoweth and Stephan, civil resistance is more effective particularly because of its higher level of mobilization. Nonviolent methods of resistance are essential in its practice and success. See Chapter 2 (31-61) for details.

campaigns, regardless of how disruptive they are. [...] Second, when violent insurgents threaten the lives of regime members and security forces, they greatly reduce the possibility of loyalty shifts. [...] Because explicitly nonviolent methods do not physically threaten members of the security forces or a regime's civil servants, members of the regime are more likely shift loyalties toward nonviolent movements rather than toward violent ones.<sup>402</sup>

The effectiveness of civil resistance relies on mass public participation and nonviolent methods are critical in mobilization. In addition to *mobilization*, Kurt Schock maintains two important conditions for the success of civil resistance—*resilience* and *leverage*.

*Resilience* refers to the ability of a challenge to withstand and recover from repression; that is, to sustain a campaign despite the actions of opponents aimed at constraining or inhibiting their activities. [...] *Leverage* refers to the capacity of a challenge to sever the opponent from the sources of power upon which it depends, either directly or through allies or third parties.<sup>403</sup>

‘Widespread mobilization is necessary for successful challenges, but it is not sufficient for their success.’ Schock continues, ‘Mobilized campaigns must remain resilient in the face of repression and gain leverage over their adversary to attain their goals.’<sup>404</sup> Therefore, nonviolence is not only a moral principle but also an effective strategy in responding to political violence.

There is another approach to examine the importance and effectiveness of nonviolent actions, that is, nonviolent action as a means of political communication. This is where the theme of this chapter, the role of photography in civil resistance, connects with this non-violent approach to political change.

## **4.2 Nonviolence as a Means of Political Communication**

The importance of *nonviolence as political communication* is distinctive while it is

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<sup>402</sup> "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict." p. 13. See also James DeNardo, *Power in Numbers : The Political Strategy of Protest and Rebellion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985).; Max Abrahms, "Why Terrorism Does Not Work," *International Security* 31, no. 2 (Fall 2006).; and Johan Galtung, *Nonviolence in Israel/Palestine* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989).

<sup>403</sup> Schock, "The Practice and Study of Civil Resistance."

<sup>404</sup> Ibid. 283.

surprisingly less developed in civil resistance research.<sup>405</sup> Brian Martin and Wendy Varney view nonviolent actions as a means of political communication. Martin and Varney attempt to show the importance and effectiveness of nonviolent actions from a communication perspective. To do this, they classify the following four political communication forms: rational discourse, electoral politics, nonviolent actions and violence. To compare these modes of communication, they set out six criteria of different political communication dimensions: dialogue, means-end compatibility, opportunity for participation, scope for oppression, power equalization, and system transformation.<sup>406</sup>

Through the comparison, Martin and Varney reach the conclusion that nonviolent actions are the best form of political communication particularly because of their distinct characteristics of openness to dialogue and participation, empowerment, and transformative features.

Nonviolent action is designed to foster dialogue. Symbolic actions are dialogic by their nature, while methods of non-cooperation and intervention typically operate to pressure opponents to enter a dialogue or to take an existing dialogue more seriously. Nonviolent means are compatible with the end, a nonviolent society. Participation in many methods of nonviolent action is open to anyone without regard to sex, age or ability. Nonviolent action has a low capacity to oppress, yet its capacity to redistribute power and transform system is potentially large, as shown for example by its role in the collapse of communist regimes in 1989 (Randle, 1991; Roberts, 1991) or in toppling dictators (Parkman, 1990; Zunes, 1994).<sup>407</sup>

Martin and Varney's examination of nonviolent action from a communication perspective is useful to understand the effectiveness of civil resistance both principally and strategically. However, as they also note, this approach is limited to understanding the process of civil resistance only from a communication lens so that it may result in underestimating power dynamic in a political context. Nevertheless, nonviolent action is distinctively important and effective in terms of 'its high transformative potential

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<sup>405</sup> Brian Martin and Wendy Varney, "Nonviolence and Communication," in *Ibid.* 40, no. 2 (March 2003). 213. Martin and Varney only found two useful works on nonviolence and communication; Bode, "Gandhi's Theory of Nonviolent Communication." and V. V. Ramana Murti, "Buber's Dialogue and Gandhi's Satyagraha," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 29, no. 4 (1968).

<sup>406</sup> Martin and Varney, "Nonviolence and Communication."

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid.* 219.

while remaining dialogic and participatory.<sup>408</sup>

The importance and effectiveness of *nonviolence as political communication* can be amplified through the media. Photojournalism, in particular, can play a key role by visualizing nonviolent action as a symbolic image. A visualized image of nonviolent action can be a powerful message in political communication.

#### 4.2.1 Three Communication Groups

To understand the role(s) of photography as a form of political communication in civil resistance, it would be useful to see audiences whom a photograph communicates with. Brian Martin and Wendy Varney suggest three groups of subjects within the dynamic of nonviolent action as communication—opponents, the third parties, and the inner group of nonviolent campaign.<sup>409</sup> I suggest that a photograph capturing nonviolent action can play important roles between the three subjects: opponents, the third parties and the inner group.

##### *1) To Opponents*

First, a nonviolent image communicates to opponents both directly and indirectly. Nonviolent action itself is an expression of communication, mainly through symbolic action, which delivers a message to opponents/government. At the same time, its action is considered as a preparation for dialogue with opponents. Nonviolent campaigns by their nature are communicative by expressing their claim and inviting opponents into dialogue.

In canonical nonviolent action, activists initially seek to resolve problems through dialogue, but when the opponent refuses to discuss matters, operates in bad faith or uses violence, nonviolent action becomes a means to encounter the opponent to enter dialogue.<sup>410</sup>

Photography is one of the most powerful mediums of communication. A photograph can communicate to opponents what a nonviolent group demands and bring them into

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<sup>408</sup> Ibid.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid. 219-222.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid. 219. Quoted in Arne Naess, *Gandhi and Group Conflict. An Exploration of Satyagraha. Theoretical Background* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1974). 90-93.

a dialogue through implicative and symbolic expression. It is often seen in such photographs that activists are holding pickets with slogans like “No War” or “Peace for All”. Slogans caught on camera becomes a message to opponents and the public. Sometimes, it is expressed by a non-verbal expression such as artistic and visual representation.

Marc Riboud’s *American young girl Jan Rose*, commonly called *Flower Child* (1967) is a prime example.<sup>411</sup> Holding a flower, the peace-loving girl stands in front of bayonets of the American National Guard outside the Pentagon. The image of *Flower Child* was the silent but powerful message to the US government in the context. Her courageous action inspired numerous people for peace and the anti-Vietnam War movement.

The June Uprising can be compared with the Gwangju Uprising on account of its nonviolent methods. As the importance of the nonviolent campaign was shared within activist groups, different forms of nonviolent protests appeared. Although the slogans the pro-democracy groups communicated to the Chun Doo-hwan regime, such as *dokjaetado* (overthrow dictatorship), *gaeheonbandae* (against the constitutional amendment), or *daetongryung-jikseonjeh* (direct president election), were clearly anti-governmental, the methods of campaign were mostly peaceful and nonviolent. For instance, a number of drivers in the major cities of South Korea honked their horns as a means of participation and support of the protest when the rally began on 10th June, 1987.<sup>412</sup> Also, office workers who were unable to participate in the protest threw toilet paper out of building windows.<sup>413</sup> These nonviolent actions were circulated via the media in Korea, which informed the campaign and its purpose to the government.

## 2) To Third Parties

Second, *nonviolence as political communication* interacts with third parties.

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<sup>411</sup> See <http://www.magnumphotos.com/Catalogue/Marc-Riboud/1967/USA-Demonstration-against-the-Vietnam-War-NN113067.html> (Accessed 22 June 2016).

<sup>412</sup> Korea Democracy Foundation, "The June Struggle for Democracy," (Seoul: Korean Democracy Foundation).

<sup>413</sup> Ibid.

Nonviolent actions and the media circulation of the images reaches not only to opponents but people who were not involved in the protest yet. 'If opponents are not receptive', as Martin and Varney argue, 'groups that are involved may be, and their influence on the opponent can be decisive.'<sup>414</sup> As we have seen previously, *backfire* is the most distinctive feature of civil resistance when activists seek nonviolent actions. From a communication perspective, it can be explained that opposition to a nonviolent campaign may promote a wider mobilization by third parties.

Johan Galtung calls this process of indirect effect "the great chain of nonviolence".<sup>415</sup> Galtung attempts to understand the process of political communication from a psychological perspective. When the activists' claim is not accepted by opponents, Galtung sees the gap between two groups as too distant and maintains intermediaries (the third parties) can fill the gap. Martin and Varney conceptualize this process as "a communication chain", noting 'if direct communication is blocked for whatever reason (physical barriers, language, meaning systems), intermediaries can constitute a communication channel that carries the message.'<sup>416</sup> Related to the media, for instance, Martin and Varney note the role of the media in the gap between Gandhi and the British colonial empire.

Because the British colonial rulers and their agents had so little respect for the Indian population, direct communications from satyagrahis had little impact. The news reports took Gandhi's message to a more receptive audience in other countries, members of which were able to communicate directly with those running Britain's colonial empire.<sup>417</sup>

In the great chain of nonviolence, the role of photography is obvious. The role of photography as bearing witness is critical in conflict situations as we have seen in the second chapter. In civil resistance, more interestingly, media coverage of nonviolent actions against opponents plays a pivotal role in raising public opinion and mobilization. As mentioned earlier, external communities prefer to support a nonviolent campaign more than a violent campaign. 'External costs of repressing

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<sup>414</sup> Martin and Varney, "Nonviolence and Communication." 219.

<sup>415</sup> Galtung, *Nonviolence in Israel/Palestine*. 13-33.

<sup>416</sup> Martin and Varney, "Nonviolence and Communication." 220.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid.

nonviolent campaigns can be high', as Chenoweth and Stephan point out, 'especially when the repression is captured by the media.'<sup>418</sup>

Media coverage of the June Uprising impacted the formation of public opinion whereas the Gwangju Massacre was completely controlled and distortedly reported as a violent riot against the regime. On 9th June, 1987, Yonsei University student Lee Han-yeol was seriously injured by tear gas. The major Korean media networks focused on the horrific tragedy that happened to the young man who was repressed by the dictatorship. The photograph capturing a man holding injured Lee Han-yeol was shown on the front of newspapers and became a symbol that indicated the unjust government.<sup>419</sup> Activists and college students, including Lee Han-yeol, made known their demands but it was not accepted. Instead, the repression of the nonviolent student led campaign was reported by the media, a vast population of citizens were very upset. The news report with the photograph was spread over the nation quickly. Finally, it lighted a fuse of the massive anti-government protest and pro-democracy campaign at a national level.

### *3) Within the Inner Group*

Lastly, nonviolence as political communication functions within the group of activists and supporters. This dynamic within the group, activists and supporters, often plays a fundamental role in developing a campaign into a mass social movement at a national level. Particularly, Martin and Varney focus on empowerment of participants, solidarity and mutual validation:

This comes through the experience of participating in action against perceived injustice, which gives rise to satisfying feelings of solidarity and mutual validation, though such desirable outcomes do not occur for all participants or in all actions.<sup>420</sup>

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<sup>418</sup> Chenoweth and Stephan, "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict." 12. Photography captures the moment of nonviolent actions and symbolizes it, emphasizing a nonviolent aspect of protesters which is often considered as a right side and right demand. Photographs effectively stimulate the third parties to be involved in the matter in short time.

<sup>419</sup> The *Dong-A Ilbo* reported Lee Han-yeol's injury, highlighting the danger of tear gas by police. Jang Byeong-soo, "Tear Gas Is Danger," *The Dong-A Ilbo* 11th June, 1987. Related to Lee Han-yeol's death, see the Lee Han-yeol Memorial Association (<http://www.leememorial.or.kr/main/index>).

<sup>420</sup> Martin and Varney, "Nonviolence and Communication." 220.



Such communication may occur either between activists or between activist and non-participants. Nonviolent actions and the shared experience may develop participants' identity and devotion. Nonviolent methods of campaign, as Schock argues, is more *resilient* than a violent campaign. Participants of nonviolent campaigns become decisive when they witness violent repression of opponents. In this way, participants would attain stronger solidarity and mutual validation.

Those who participate in and support nonviolent actions are, in essence, communicating with themselves via their actions, revealing to each other their own power to act and to make a difference. The supportive response of other activists provides validation for their actions and beliefs (Colquhoun & Martin, 2001), creating the experience of empowerment.<sup>421</sup>

‘Another aspect of collective empowerment occurs’, as Martin and Varney continues, ‘when non-participants who witness nonviolent actions become aware that their views are more widely shared than they realized.’ Moreover, ‘when censorship or social pressure restricts the expression of political sympathies, it is possible for action to trigger a rapid expansion in overt support.’<sup>422</sup> Therefore, as the shared identity of protesters grows, the campaign rapidly expands and finally becomes a collective civil resistance movement.

It is noteworthy that Martin and Varney attempt to show the process of how nonviolent action effects participants and campaign by highlighting mobilization and empowerment. In the Gandhian model, a solid belief in nonviolence is a *prerequisite* for nonviolent action. On the other hand, the communication framework actually takes the reverse, that is, action first then principle later. It explains how casual citizens who are not devoted to nonviolent campaign learn and share the meaning of the nonviolent campaigns through their participation.

In this way, media coverage of a nonviolent campaign, sometimes under repression, plays a crucial role in the formation of civil resistance as a social movement. Scholars commonly agree that success of a civil resistance mainly draws upon its mobilization stage, emphasizing the role of media (Sharp 1973; Martin & Varney 2003; Stephan & Chenoweth 2008, 2011; Schock 2013). Thus, the role of photography in

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<sup>421</sup> Ibid.

<sup>422</sup> Ibid.

civil resistance is obviously significant.

Linked to this, a photograph(s) sometimes labels a character of a protest. Examples can be founded in Korean history. In the case of the Gwangju Uprising, for example, a few images of violent protesters were misused by the government to accuse the protesters (citizens of Gwangju) of being rioters or reactionaries related to North Korea.<sup>423</sup> On the other hand, in the case of the anti-US Beef Demonstration in 2008, Seoul, the media coverage of the demonstration was positive with such symbols as “candlelight”, “family”, and “high school girls”. The so-called *2008 Candlelight Vigil* was considered as an alternative protest culture of Korean Society. From my perspective, it can be argued that the candle image contributed to the demonstration by changing the perception of the protest from violent to nonviolent.<sup>424</sup>

In the next, I show an iconic image of nonviolent action in the Korean democratization history. It would be a good example to consider a symbolic role of photography for promoting nonviolent resistance.

#### 4.2.2. Case Study: Ah! My Fatherland and the June Uprising



Figure 7. “Ah, My Fatherland!” at Busan, South Korea during the June Democratic Uprising 26 June 1987 / Photo by Koh Myung-jin

A man is running along the street. Shirtless with his hands up high, it looks as if the

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<sup>423</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>424</sup> The 2008 anti-US Beef Protest (Candlelight Vigil) was considered significantly by scholars in different disciplines.

man is crying out to the sky. There are no cars on the road; instead, there are a group of people following or watching him. In the background most people are wearing masks and standing at a distance from him, we may notice that there is something going on—it is neither a friendly nor a peaceful event. If one looks carefully, one may find white marks, something like powder or smog, on the road surface. People without masks are covering their noses and mouths. It was because the police had used tear gas to suppress the massive protest.

Two men, wearing masks and goggles, stand behind him holding a giant *Taegeukgi*, the national flag of South Korea. *Taegeukgi* is the spirit of the nation and symbolizes harmony and a desire for peace and purity.<sup>425</sup> It was first designed by Korean independence activists under Japanese Imperialism (1915-1945). Holding and waving *Taegeukgi* has meant a noble and courageous action fighting for freedom and peace since the independence movement. The audience of the photograph might well have similar feelings, such as the desire for freedom and peace when looking at the giant *Taegeukgi*. It would be why the photographer Koh Myung-jin named the caption of the image as “Ah, My Fatherland!”

Near the top of the image are citizens, who also wear masks, looking at the man or the direction he is running in. Together, all of these elements of the photograph (i.e., the man’s pose, his face, the giant flag in the background, and black-and-white imaging) capture a dramatic scene from this historical moment and, therefore, provoke indescribable feelings. It is even sublimely beautiful. I have quite different feelings from when I see other images of atrocities and victims of violence during the conflicts. It has a certain power that touches something deep in my heart.

I am particularly interested in the photograph because of the topless man on the right in the middle of the image. It provokes a number of questions, including:

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<sup>425</sup> The meaning of *Taegeukgi* is that its design “symbolizes the principles of the *yin* and *yang* in oriental philosophy. The circle in the center is divided into two equal parts, where the upper red responds to the active cosmic forces of the yang; conversely, the lower blue section represents the passive cosmic forces of the yin. The flag's background is white, representing Korean’s desire for peace and purity. The circle is surrounded by four trigrams, one in each corner, characterizing continual movement, balance and harmony. Each trigram symbolizes one of the four universal elements (heaven, earth, fire, and water).’ The Korea Tourism Organization [https://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/AKR/AK\\_ENG\\_1\\_1.jsp](https://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/AKR/AK_ENG_1_1.jsp) (Accessed 25 August 2016).

What is he doing being topless and holding his hands up high? Where is he running into? What is he saying—more correctly, shouting? The photograph was taken during the 6.26 Peace March on the *Munhyeon Rotary* in the city of Busan on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June, 1987 which was one of the collective movements during the June Democratic Uprising (hereafter “the June Uprising”) between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of June, 1987.<sup>426</sup>

The June Uprising is significant for the way that it brought an end of the long military dictatorship by a massive civilian movement.<sup>427</sup> I consider the June Uprising as an example of civil resistance for its nonviolent campaign where numerous citizens participated nationwide. Although there were some physical conflicts between protesters and riot police, generally speaking, it was a peaceful democratic movement.<sup>428</sup>

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<sup>426</sup> The June Democratic Uprising was a collective democratic movement seeking to end the military regime it lasted from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> of June, 1987 in South Korea. On 10<sup>th</sup> June, 1987, the *Minju Jeongui-dang* (Democratic Justice Party, DJP), the ruling party led by Chun Doo-hwan, convened the national convention in order to arrange for Noh Tae-woo to succeed Chun as president through the constitutional protection (*Ho-Heon*, 護憲) process. To oppose DJP's succession of presidency, the National Coalition for Democratic Constitution, NCDC) was established and protested against the government's attempt to protection of the Constitution who was trying to protect the constitution, the government or the NCDC. On that day, the movement was participated in by 240,000 people in 22 regions across the country. The movement continued until the 29<sup>th</sup> of June, 1987 with partial victory of the protesters in the way it ended the long military dictatorship by operating the direct presidential election but could not prevent Noh Tae-woo becoming the next president. Regarding the June Democratic Uprising, see Korea Democracy Foundation, *Han'guk Minjuhwa Undongsa* [The History of Democratization Movement in Korea], 3 vols., vol. I-III (Seoul: Dolbegae, 2010); Hae-gu Chong, Hye-jin Kim, and Sang-ho Chong, *6-Wol Hangjaeng Kwa Han'guk Ui Minjujuui* [The June Uprising and Korean Democracy], ed. Korea Democracy Foundation (Soul-si: Minjuhwa Undong Kinyom Saophoe Yon'guso, 2004); Saophoe wol Minju Hangjaeng Kyesung and Saophoe Minjuhwa Undong Kinyom, *6-Wol Hangjaeng Ul Kirok Hada: Han'guk Minjuhwa Taejangjong* [A Long March for democracy in Korea] ([Seoul]: 6-wol Minju Hangjaeng Kyesung Saophoeohoe : Minjuhwa Undong Kinyom Saophoe, 2007).

<sup>427</sup> The 27-year period is called the military dictatorship started by the 5.16 coup led by Park Jung-hee in 1961 and continued by the 12.12 coup in 1979 and the 5.17 coup in 1980 led by Chun Doo-hwan. One day after the 5.17 coup, the Gwangju Massacre occurred with political purposes. Since the Gwangju Uprising in 1980, activists and civil organizations had kept their campaigns for democratization of Korea. In this way, the June Uprising is considered as a movement that succeeded from the Gwangju Uprising. It also demanded the overthrowing of Chun Doo-hwan's regime and requested the democratization of Korea. As the result of the massive campaign at national level for 19 days, the 27-years military regimes from the Park Jung-hee's to the Chun Doo-hwan's (1961-1987) finally ended.

<sup>428</sup> In the case of the Gwangju Uprising in 1980, the protesters and citizens of Gwangju had to establish the militia for survival, protecting themselves from attack of the martial law army. For the citizens of Gwangju, the use of violence was inevitable. Regarding the legitimacy of the use of violence of the militia during the Gwangju Uprising, see Dong-yoon Lee and Jun-sik Park, "Legitimacy of Resistance Violence in Democratization Process: Armed Struggle of Gwangju's Civil

In particular, the 6.26 Peace March was planned and practiced in a nonviolent way. For instance, the *Minju-dang* (Democratic Party), the minority party at the time, who led the 6.26 Peace March along with other civil organizations officially announced their resolution of nonviolence for the campaign through the newspapers.<sup>429</sup> The photograph [Fig. 7] is important evidence that clarifies the characteristics of the June Uprising as a form of civil resistance. Through the image, we can grasp a better understanding of the historical context and the practice of civil resistance. It is particularly because the man's action in the image manifests the value of civil resistance both theoretically and strategically.

Moreover, the 6.26 Peach March was held for the commemoration of Park Jong-chul's death following brutal torture and for protesting against the dictatorship.<sup>430</sup> While in the confrontation between the police and protesters, the police fired tear gas toward the group of protesters. At that moment, the young man came out of the crowd and shouted to the police, "Stop shooting the tear gas!"<sup>431</sup>

The photographer Koh Myung-jin who took the photograph recollects the moment as the most important moment of his life.<sup>432</sup> When Koh Myung-jin pressed the shutter down, he was trembling.<sup>433</sup> What makes this particular image so special? It is not only because of its visual quality produced by the photographer but because of the man's action itself—*courageous* and *sacrificial*. In terms of responding to violence, the topless man's action was significant as a way of resisting violence nonviolently. In terms of representing a protester against violence, the image of the

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Army in the May 18 Uprising," *Journal of Democracy and Human Rights* 8, no. 1 (2008).

<sup>429</sup> "Nonviolence Resolution," *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* 26th June, 1987. You may also find a relevant report at the *Dong-A Ilbo* at the same day.

<sup>430</sup> Park Jong-chul, a Seoul National University student, was imprisoned for his involvement in the pro-democracy protest against the military regime on 13<sup>th</sup> January, 1987. The truth related to his death was hidden by the government, but revealed to society that it was caused by brutal torture. Park's death and its concealment and fabrication by the government seriously damaged the moral standing and legitimacy of Chun Doo-hwan's regime; and became a critical trigger of the June Democratic Uprising. See "Park Jong-Chul's Death by Torture," (Korea Democracy Foundation). (Accessed 3 October 2016).

<sup>431</sup> Eun-Joong Kwon, "AP Picks the 100 Greatest Photographs of the 20th Century," *Media Today* 7th October, 1999.

<sup>432</sup> Koh Myung-jin worked as a photojournalist at the *Hankook Ilbo* during the time.

<sup>433</sup> Jeong-hwan Lee, "[Interview of June] Koh Myung-Jin, Photo and Media Director of Newsis, Ah, My Fatherland!," *Oh My News* 31 May, 2007. (Accessed 15 June 2016).

topless man with the giant national flag (*Taegeukki*) is distinguished from other images during the protest in the way he appears as neither a passive victim of violence nor part of a violent riot. It rather represents the form of nonviolence resisting violence in the conflict situation.

Koh Myung-jin's *Ah, My Fatherland!* was not published in newspapers during or immediately after the protest. The editor of the *Hankook Ilbo* decided that it would be too politically sensational. Twelve years later, in 1999, the photograph came into the spotlight in public as the *Associated Press* picked the image as one of the Top 100 Historical Photographs of the Twentieth Century. Every June or if there is an event related to democracy, the photograph *Ah, My Fatherland!* is frequently shown in the media outlets of South Korea. The photograph is now considered as the symbol and spirit of the democratization movement of Korea.

The beauty of the image is the protester's nonviolent action who resisted the military regime. It leads us to consider the meaning of nonviolence. Nonviolence is a key theme not only in certain strands of Christianity but also in peace studies. Particularly, the man's action in the image can be seen as a form of "civil resistance". The theory and practice of civil resistance is considered as an alternative way of building peace and resisting to violence. In the next part, I will discuss theological perspectives on nonviolence which would enrich our understanding on nonviolence into a deeper level.

### **4.3 Christian Perspectives on Nonviolence**

Even though this photograph was not published until 12 years after the actual event, it would become one of the most widely used pictures of the June uprising in 1987. As we have seen it embodied an act of non-violence. How does this photograph resonate with the work of recent theologians promoting non-violent action? Three of the leading voices within this diverse tradition are John Howard Yoder, Walter Wink, and Miroslav Volf. They offer distinctive readings of biblical material which shed light upon possible ways in which to interact theologically with this photograph and develop new perspectives on understanding non-violent theory and practice.

### 4.3.1 John Howard Yoder and Nonresistance to Evil

The idea and practice of civil resistance is not a new invention of modern society. We can see an example of a nonviolent campaign in Jesus' days in Jerusalem. In his book *Politics of Jesus*, John Howard Yoder argues that nonviolent resistance was embedded in the Jewish culture. Under the rule of the Roman Empire, the Jewish community often encountered political and social conflicts in order to keep their religious identity. Drawing upon Josephus' *Antiquities*, Yoder provides historical evidences how the Jewish community managed conflicts with the Roman regime in nonviolent ways.<sup>434</sup>

For example, when Pilate, the procurator of Judea, introduced Caesar's effigies to Jerusalem in contravention of Jewish laws which forbade the making of images, they requested that the procurator remove the effigies. In spite of military threats by Pilate, the Jews kept requesting and petitioning to the governor. As a result, Pilate, moved by their firm attitudes and nonviolent ways, commanded the images to be carried back from Jerusalem to Caesarea.<sup>435</sup> According to Yoder, at least two instances of civil resistance were successful within a decade. This suggests, as Yoder argues, that nonviolent resistance could be perceived as an alternative option within the historical context.

For Yoder, Jesus' teaching and practice of nonviolence is founded in the socio-political context where Jesus lived. He argues that what Jesus taught in his time was a form of life that his audiences should follow. Jesus' messages were 'much more "political" than "existential" or cultic'. Yoder continues:

His [Jesus] disavowal of Peter's well-intentioned effort to defend him cannot be taken out of the realm of ethics by the explanation that he had to get himself immolated in order to satisfy the requirements of some metaphysically motivated doctrine of the atonement; it was because God's will for God's servant in this world is that he should renounce legitimate defense. When Jesus resisted repeatedly with the tempter, from the desert at the beginning to the garden at the end, this was not a clumsily contrived morality play meaning to teach us that kingship was no temptations; it was because God's servant in

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<sup>434</sup> John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972). See Chapter 5 "The Possibility of Nonviolent Resistance". Yoder notes that his argument was expanded from two resources: André Trocmé, *Jesus-Christ Et La Revolution Non-Violente* (Gneve: Labor et Fides, 1961). & Milton R. Konvitz, *Judaism and Human Rights*, The B'nai B'rith Jewish Heritage Classics (New York; W. W. Norton, 1972).

<sup>435</sup> Josephus *Antiquities* 18.3; in his *Wars* 2.9.

this world was facing, and rejecting, the claim that the exercise of social responsibility through the use of self-evidently necessary means is a moral duty.<sup>436</sup>

Yoder emphasized the socio-political Jesus which provided a founding theory of nonviolence for the Christian community. In spite of his contribution, his argument is criticized in two ways. First, his emphasis on the historical Jesus and political meaning does not give full weight to the cosmic Christ, the messiah of human being through the whole history. As Ray Gingerich points out, Yoder's emphasis on the earthly Jesus is the product of his "occasional theology" rather than systematic. Gingerich acknowledged it was because Yoder attempted to overcome the dualistic view among the theologians at Ivy League schools who supported the just war theory.<sup>437</sup> Nevertheless, he argues that Yoder's approach with the earthly Jesus failed to overcome the image of the Warrior-God while emphasizing the concept of *shalom* as 'the defining characteristic of God's people.'

On the one hand, Yoder substantiated this normative emphasis on shalom through his consistent focus on Jesus—the fully human one, who is our fullest revelation of the will of God, who in its invitation to follow him is normative for our daily lives. On the other hand, Yoder continued to present God in the biblical images of a warrior, as one who uses violence to accomplish divine ends.<sup>438</sup>

Yoder's Christocentric approach leaves us problems: How do violence and non-violence coexist in the Trinity? How to overcome the image of the wrath and vengeance of God in the Scripture? And how to respond to the myth of redemptive violence that was deeply embedded in the whole of Christian theology? Regarding the problems, recent scholars such as Miroslav Volf argue that the dichotomy between nonviolent Jesus and a Warrior-God is the product of western philosophy and it can be overcome by faith in God's absolute sovereignty.<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>436</sup> John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 1994). 98.

<sup>437</sup> Ray C. Gingerich, "Theological Foundations for Ethics of Nonviolence: Was Yoder's God a Warrior?," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 77, no. 3 (2003). 417-421.

<sup>438</sup> Ibid. 418.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid. 419-421. Also see Chapter 7 "Violence and Peace" in Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996).



The second critique of Yoder's argument on nonviolence is whether the teaching of nonviolence is primarily for the Christian community. For Yoder, Christian ethics including nonviolence is based on discipleship as imitating of Jesus. Thus, the ethos of nonviolence primarily depends upon the faith of Jesus as one's messiah. In this way, the command of nonviolence is exclusively applied to the Christian community. Moreover, it raises another question whether faithfulness and effectiveness of nonviolence are (in)compatible. In relation to the question, Tom Harder suggests the possibility of coexistence between faithfulness and effectiveness of nonviolence, while Yoder consistently prioritizes faithfulness over effectiveness.<sup>440</sup> In short, Yoder's emphasis on the earthly Jesus can be criticized for its narrow understanding of God and the impact of the God's sovereignty. Nevertheless, the image of nonviolent Jesus in the socio-political context is still providing a significant way of understanding of nonviolence in our society.

#### **4.3.2 Walter Wink and the Sermon on the Mount**

Then now, let us turn to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and what Jesus teaches on nonviolence. How does Jesus teach his readers to respond to one's opponent? The Sermon on the Mount with the statements like "Do not resist an evildoer"; "turn the other cheek"; "give your cloak"; and "go the second mile" have been controversial to its readers. (Matt. 5:38-41).<sup>441</sup> The passage reveals the high ethical standard of the Kingdom of God, as described by Jesus. However, it is often misunderstood that Jesus' teachings on nonviolence equated it with *nonresistance* to evil. It is viewed as impractical idealism, or only applicable in an individual realm, impossible at a societal level. It is because *nonresistance* to evil can be abused by the oppressor as a means of control over the oppressed. Does Jesus actually teach nonresistance to evil?

Walter Wink is a helpful guide as we seek to address this question. In his book *The Powers That Be: Theology for New Millennium* (1972), Wink argues that Jesus'

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<sup>440</sup> Tom Harder, "Dichotomy between Faithfulness and Effectiveness in the Peace Theology of John Howard Yoder," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 81, no. 2 (2007).

<sup>441</sup> For various theological interpretations of the passage, see Jeffrey P. Greenman, Timothy Larsen, and Stephen R. Spencer, *The Sermon on the Mount through the Centuries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007).

teaching (Matt. 5:38-41) means neither nonresistance nor passivity.

[T]he gospel does not teach nonresistance to evil. Jesus counsels resistance, but without violence. The Greek word translated “resist” in Matt. 5:39 is *antistēnai*, meaning literally to stand (*stēnai*) against (*anti*). What translators have overlooked is that *antistēnai* is most often used in the Greek version of the Old Testament as a technical term for warfare. It describes the way opposing armies would march toward each other until their ranks met. Then they would “take a stand,” that is, fight. [...] In short, *antistēnai* means more here than simply to “resist” evil. It means to resist violently, to revolt or rebel, to engage in an armed insurrection.<sup>442</sup>

Jesus never teaches we should submit to evil; but instead, we should refuse to respond to evil with an equally evil response. He is urging us to find a third way beyond passivity and violence. That is, resist evil actively, yet nonviolently. In this way, as I agree with Wink, the Scholars Version of Matt. 5:39 is close to Jesus’ original teaching in the context: “Don’t react violently against the one who is evil.”<sup>443</sup>

Nonviolent resistance is the third way that Jesus commands us to follow. It provides a different reading of the Sermon on the Mount. Wink persuasively shows that Jesus’s teachings such as “turn the other cheek” and “go the second mile” are not passive actions, but nonviolent actions as a third way in the historical context.<sup>444</sup> In the Jewish culture of Jesus’ day, it was not admitted to gesture with the left hand because the left hand was only used for unclean tasks. Thus, if anyone strikes someone’s right cheek with the right hand (Matt. 5:39b), the only feasible blow is a backhand for the left cheek.

According to Wink, the backhand was ‘not a blow to injure, but to insult, humiliate, degrade.’ The backhand was a master’s typical violence humiliating an inferior such as slaves and women. So when Jesus said the verse, the target were inferiors like slaves. If we notice the true intention of Jesus’ message “turn the other cheek”, which means Jesus encourages servants and slaves to refuse their master’s violence by a third way. This act of defiance renders the master incapable of asserting

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<sup>442</sup> Walter Wink, *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium* (New York: Doubleday, 1998). 99-100.

<sup>443</sup> Robert Tomson Fortna, *The Gospel of Matthew: The Scholars Version Annotated with Introduction and Greek Text* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2005).

<sup>444</sup> Wink, *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium*. 101-111.

his dominance in this relationship, as Wink argues:

By turning the cheek, then, the “inferior” is saying: “I’m a human being, just like you. I refuse to be humiliated any longer. I am your equal. I am a child of God. I won’t take it anymore.”<sup>445</sup>

Such defiance may incur trouble but it was a nonviolent action fighting against humiliation based on human dignity. This resonates with Gandhi’s principle, “The first principle of nonviolent action is that of noncooperation with everything humiliating.”<sup>446</sup> Jesus’ third way is, therefore, neither cowardly submission nor violent reprisal.<sup>447</sup>

In the next, we will turn to the second critique that the biblical teaching justifies violence which is often called as the myth of redemptive violence.

### 4.3.3 Wink and the Myth of Redemptive Violence

In Christianity, (non)violence has been a key ethical issue (Yoder 1972; Dominique 1989; Wink 1998 & 2003; Hauerwas 2004; Yoder et al. 2009 & 2010).<sup>448</sup> Contrary to

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<sup>445</sup> Ibid. 102.

<sup>446</sup> Ibid.

<sup>447</sup> Another thing to discuss is whether the Bible teaches submission to powers. There are related questions: what is Powers? Should Christian civilians submit to all forms of powers? In the New Testament, particularly in the Epistles, Paul teaches obedience as the important rule of house tables (Colossians 3:18-4:1; Ephesians 5:21-6:9; 1 Peters 2:13-3:7). Among Paul’s Epistles, Romans (Chapter 13) is the most important text in relation to Christian (dis)obedience to powers. Regarding the questions, Walter Wink, John Howard Yoder, and Jacques Ellul have done considerable research, focusing on the concept of Powers. See Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament*, The Powers (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984); *Unmasking the Powers: The Invisible Forces That Determine Human Existence*, The Powers (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1986); *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination*, The Powers (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992); Wink, *The Powers That Be : Theology for a New Millennium*. Also see Chapter 8 & 9 in Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*. For the work of Jacques Ellul, See Marva Dawn, "The Concept of The "Principalities and Powers" In the Works of Jacques Ellul," ed. John H. Yoder (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1992).

<sup>448</sup> See John Howard Yoder et al., *The War of the Lamb: The Ethics of Nonviolence and Peacemaking* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009); Dominique Barbé, *A Theology of Conflict and Other Writings on Nonviolence* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989); Stanley Hauerwas, *Performing the Faith : Bonhoeffer and the Practice of Nonviolence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004); Wink, *The Powers That Be : Theology for a New Millennium*; Walter Wink, *Jesus and Nonviolence : A Third Way*, Facets (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2003); John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus; Vicit Agnus Noster* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972); *Nonviolence--a Brief History: The Warsaw Lecture* (Waco, TX: The Baylor University Press, 2010).

the general expectation that peace is one of the core messages of Christianity, the readers of the Bible are often embarrassed by scandalous texts related to violence. In the Old Testament, there are six hundred passages of explicit violence, one thousand verses where God's own violent actions of punishment are described, a hundred passages where Yahweh expressively commands others to kill people, and several stories where God irrationally kills or tries to kill for no apparent reason (for example, Exod. 4:24-26).<sup>449</sup> The New Testament surprisingly begins the massive infanticide by King Herod in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:13-18); and ends with the eschatological war and the final judgment (Revelation Ch.16-22).<sup>450</sup>

These violent texts are enough to confuse today's audiences about the biblical teaching of (non)violence. Importantly, those texts are often misunderstood as saying that violence is 'the necessary precondition for the gradual perception of the meaning of violence,' as Walter Wink argues:

The violence of Scripture, so embarrassing to us today, became the means by which sacred violence was revealed for what it is: a lie perpetrated against victims in the name of God. God was working through violence to expose violence for what it is and to reveal the divine nature as nonviolent.<sup>451</sup>

Under God's great purpose, violence is justified and even sacred. In this myth of redemptive violence, sacrifice is necessary. The so-called scapegoat mechanism relying on the biblical texts affects today's society. In the American context, Wink asserts that the myth of redemptive violence provides "divine legitimation" for the suppression of poor people and weak nations. Wink views every Power as having inner spirituality as well as an external form. The myth of redemptive violence serves as an inner spirituality that justifies violence against one's enemy at the national security state.

The myth of redemptive violence is easily found in children's cartoons and comics, movies, or computer games. But it is also shown everywhere around us such

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<sup>449</sup> Wink, *The Powers That Be : Theology for a New Millennium*. 84.

<sup>450</sup> Miroslav Volf attempts to respond to the contradictory and incompatible images of Jesus between a lamb and the warrior on the white horse in Revelation. See Chapter 7 in Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace : A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*.

<sup>451</sup> Wink, *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium*. 85-86.

as the media, sports, nationalism, foreign policy, televangelism, etc.<sup>452</sup> It provides the basis of a dualistic and oversimplified worldview, dividing between “us” and “them”—which often expands into “us” and “enemy” at a national and international level. In the mechanism, as Wink argues, salvation works through identification so that use of violence is justified for the sake of justice and salvation for *us*. Wink views nationalism as the example of the myth of redemptive violence:

The myth of redemptive violence is, in short, nationalism become absolute. This myth speaks *for* God; it does not listen for God to speak. It invokes the sovereignty of radical judgment by God. It misappropriates the language, symbols, and scriptures of Christianity. [...] Its symbol is not the cross but the crosshairs of a gun. Its offer is not forgiveness but victory. Its good news is not the unconditional love of enemies but their final elimination. Its salvation is not a new heart but a successful foreign policy. It usurps the revelation of God’s purposes for humanity in Jesus. It is blasphemous. It is idolatrous.<sup>453</sup>

According to Wink, the myth of redemptive violence is not what the Bible actually teaches; rather, it reveals the veil of the scapegoat mechanism. Among those violent stories, the death of Jesus on the cross would be the most symbolic story in relation to (non)violence. The death of Jesus is the manifestation of ‘the sacrificial system as a form of organized violence in the service of social tranquility.’<sup>454</sup> As René Girard asserts, the Bible was written from the perspective of the victims:

Scripture rehabilitates persecuted sufferers. God is revealed, not as demanding sacrifice, but as taking the part of the sacrificed. From Genesis to Revelation, the victims cry for justice and deliverance from the world of violence, where they are made scapegoats. In the cross these cries find vindication.<sup>455</sup>

The cross is the symbol of the *last* scapegoat in the world of violence. From the Epistle to the Hebrews, its core message keeps proclaiming that ‘Jesus was sent by God to be the last scapegoat and to reconcile us, once and for all, to God’.<sup>456</sup> The cross does not symbolize the justification of scapegoat but the end of the scapegoat framework, by

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<sup>452</sup> Ibid. 48-56. Walter Wink provides several examples of the myth of redemptive violence in the media in detail.

<sup>453</sup> Ibid. 61-62.

<sup>454</sup> Ibid. 85.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid. 86.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid. 87.

giving himself as the *last* scapegoat. What the cross symbolizes means that Jesus resists evil nonviolently to break the cycle of violence by confronting danger and sacrificing himself for others. Therefore, the symbol of the cross as a perfect form of nonviolence has significant meanings to civil resistance today.

Yoder and Wink raise questions about both whether and how individuals and communities can resist non-violently oppressive powers. The image of “the topless man” visualizes a form of nonviolent resistance. The man’s naked body and unarmed hands symbolizes his non-violent way of resistance against the dictatorship. It represents a man’s noble and brave sacrifice who *resists* (stands against) evil by giving himself as a scapegoat for other protesters. In this way, the topless man of the photograph resembles Jesus on the cross. The symbol of cross would be most influential in the formation of Christian perspective on (non)violence. Miroslav Volf would be a right person to deepen our discussion.

#### **4.3.4 Miroslav Volf and the Cross as Breaking the Cycle of Violence**

The cross is neither the symbol of passivity nor the myth of redemptive violence. Rather, it is the symbol that breaks the cycle of violence, by giving himself as the *last* scapegoat to *resist* evil. What the cross symbolizes is not only the third way beyond passivity and violence but the counter approach to the culture of the sword in the Roman Empire. As Miroslav Volf argues, Jesus demonstrated there is a third way counter to the culture of violence. As written in *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov, there are two types of world: Pilate’s and Jesus’. ‘In Pilate’s world, truth and justice were fruits of Caesar’s sword.’<sup>457</sup> In Jesus’ kingdom, truth and justice were

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<sup>457</sup> Volf introduces the scene of Pilate’s trial of Jesus in *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov in order to compare two different approaches to powers and violence: Caesar’s world and Jesus’ kingdom. While Caesar’s world that Pilate seeks represents a culture of the sword, Jesus’ kingdom represents a culture of peace by nonviolence. It can be argued that Jesus’ kingdom is a realm of faith, not applicable to a secular society who do not follow the teaching of Jesus. However, two different models as symbols affect anyone regardless one’s (non)faithfulness. In this chapter, I focus on the symbolic function of the cross as the exemplar of nonviolence. Hence, Volf’s contrast of two symbols are helpful to our topic—how a photograph of nonviolence functions in a conflict situation. It would give a hint through looking at how the symbol of the cross represents nonviolence and works to its audiences.

alternatives to Caesar's sword.<sup>458</sup>

Volf leads us to encounter with the fundamental questions: Do we (Christians) truly believe there is an alternative way countering to Caesar's truth and justice? Are we aware that we cannot escape the cycle of violence as long as we seek for Caesar's sword?

How can truth and justice be anything but deception and oppression to those who have been brought to insight by violence? Will they not reach for the sword themselves to establish their truth and their justice? The sword intended to root out violence ends up fostering it. The fear of the "chaos from below" elicits "chaos from above," which in turn perpetuates the chaos from below" (cf. Assmann and Assmann 1990, 20). We are caught in a vicious cycle: competing truths and justices call forth violence, and violence enthrones the truths and justices of its perpetrators.<sup>459</sup>

It is impossible to break the vicious cycle of violence by Caesar's sword. What Jesus showed on the cross is the *only* way through which humanity can transcend the cycle of violence. The cross symbolizes the way of nonviolence and its result—even its means identified with its end. In some sense, the cross can be seen as the symbol of passivity and the myth of redemptive violence. The cross, some may argue, is a means of maintaining domination system and justifying the sacrificial system. However, this is not what the cross truly means. As we have seen earlier, Jesus himself chose the death on the cross because he wanted to resist Caesar's world. He refuses to grab a sword but transforms swords into ploughshares (Isaiah 2:4).

The vision of "swords into ploughshares" would seem idealistic and impossible, yet the crucified messiah attests there is a way through the cross—transform violence through nonviolence. For Volf, 'the cross was not a tragic result of the kind of self-denial that underwrites violence, but a predictable end to a life of struggle for God's peace in a world of violence.'<sup>460</sup> In this way, Volf suggests four

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<sup>458</sup> Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*. 275.

<sup>459</sup> Ibid. 227.

<sup>460</sup> Ibid. 291. For Volf, the crucifixion was not a tragic result with Jesus being passively driven to death. But rather Jesus with intention chose the cross within a socio-political context. In this way, the cross of Jesus can be considered as a form of nonviolent resistance to Caesar's world. John Howard Yoder also makes a similar argument with Volf. Yoder particularly stresses the acts of Jesus were radical and political in the context. See Chapter 6 & 8 in Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*.

ways in which the crucified Messiah challenges violence:

First, the cross *breaks the cycle of violence*.

Second, the cross *lays bare the mechanism of scapegoating*.

Third, the cross is part of Jesus' *struggle* for God's truth and justice.

Fourth, the cross is *a divine embrace of the deceitful and the unjust*.<sup>461</sup>

As we seen earlier in the case of Matt. 5:39-41, 'Jesus is not advocating nonviolence merely as a technique for outwitting the enemy, but as a just means of opposing the enemy in a way that holds open the possibility of the enemy's becoming just also.'<sup>462</sup> The cross, in particular, symbolizes Jesus' third way of nonviolence and indicates there is an alternative way of resisting violence. The cross is not merely a religious symbol but implies God's end and means for building peace and reconciliation. Therefore, it can be a radically ethical practice by remembering and following the Cross. Likewise, a photograph like *Ah, My Fatherland!* can become an important medium for resisting violence and building peace in political violence.

In summary, we have looked at several progressive theologians advocacy of nonviolence. Yoder rethinks the life and teaching of Jesus which was grounded in his social and political context, not purely individualistic or spiritual. He argues that his disciples should follow him and nonviolence is the core of his message. Wink argues that the life of Jesus was neither violent nor passive to violence, but rather he taught how to resist violence wisely, that is, nonviolently. Moreover, both Yoder and Wink acknowledge the dangerous interpretations and uses of violent phrases in the Bible. The death of Christ on the cross is the example of the myth of redemptive violence as a belief that violence is sometimes necessary for a larger redemption. However, Volf argues that the cross is neither the symbol of passivity to violence nor the myth of redemptive violence; but it is the symbol of Jesus' third way to break the cycle of violence. Jesus showed the way of nonviolence as an alternative way toward peace. It does take an act of creative imagination to build a bridge between the insights of Yoder,

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<sup>461</sup> Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*. 291-295.

<sup>462</sup> Wink, *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium*. 110.



Wink and Volf on non-violence, and the photograph of a half-naked, unarmed, man running towards the camera. As the cross, often represented as a semi-naked figure dying, is used as a symbol of brave nonviolence, I argue that the photograph *Ah, My Fatherland!* can be used to symbolize the nonviolence of the June Uprising through the man's noble action against the military regime.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

A photograph has the potential to transform violence by mobilizing audiences to engage critically with memories of violence. In this context, photographs not only provide representation of violence and grief as seen in previous chapters, but can also play an active role in empowering people to overcome fear and resist violence nonviolently. This is why contemporary photography scholars and journalists can argue that photojournalism, even with its violent images contained in what is sometimes described as war photojournalism, still has a value and a significant role. This is contrary to those who propose a compassion fatigue theory, arguing that repeated exposure to violent images can reduce moral sensibility.<sup>463</sup> In other words, even though photography can produce cultural fatigue from overwhelming violent representations, it can also promote moral sensibility and social actions against violence.

In two cases [Fig. 1 and 4] in the previous chapters, civilians were described as passive victims. Thus, they symbolized the weakness and painfulness of the victims of the Gwangju Massacre. On the other hand, two photographs [Fig. 6 and 7] portrayed a protester not only as an active agent standing against the violent dictatorship but also a nonviolent civilian yearning for peace. This image produced a symbol of a nonviolent resistance, resonating with Walter Wink's third way discussed above, of the June Uprising. The symbol of unarmed and civilian demonstration would appeal more to

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<sup>463</sup> E.g. David Campbell's "The Myth of Compassion Fatigue" in Kennedy and Patrick, *The Violence of the Image: Photography and International Conflict*, International Library of Visual Culture (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014). Also see Susan D. Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War, and Death* (New York: Routledge, 1999); and Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 1990). *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Staus and Giroux, 2003).

third parties than images of violent demonstration.<sup>464</sup>

Both the Grand Rally for Democratization in Gwangju [Fig. 6] and the 6.26 Peace March [Fig. 7] were planned and proceeded based on the principle of nonviolence. However, the government kept labeling them as violent riots by their controlling of the media. By contrast to state descriptions of violent riots, the images of the peaceful march and topless man with the giant *Taegeukgi* provide some visual evidence of how the protests were not as the government controlled media described them. Through the images, its audiences would be aware of the government's violent repression (from the image of tear gas and men wearing masks); at the same time, audiences could become more engaged with into the protests with such feelings as pride and courage, as well as a sense of justice, and hopefulness.

As I have argued, recent civil resistance studies have shown that civil resistance can be an alternative third way toward building a better society. The history of civil resistance and its success are, therefore, significant in peace studies. The history of civil resistance and its success has a significance for peace and conflict studies. In his famous book, *Peace by Peaceful Means*, Johan Galtung highlights civil resistance and non-violent action as a key of holistic transformation of conflict.<sup>465</sup> This approach suggests that civil resistance is not only a principle that ought to be followed religiously or morally but a strategy to bring peaceful change out of social struggles. That is, whereas pacifism was often criticized as being too idealistic and unrealistic, this strategic approach to civil resistance considers whether or not civil resistance is actually effective in socio-political conflicts.

The image of nonviolent action as a form of political communication communicates with different audiences such as opponents, third parties, and participants. The image of the peaceful march with professors and students of Chonnam National University [Fig. 6] and the image of the topless man in *Ah, My Fatherland!* [Fig. 7] provide powerful symbols of nonviolence. Those images show

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<sup>464</sup> Although it had not been published at the time, its reception by third parties was shown later as it was selected one of the AP's Top 100 Historical Photographs of the Twentieth Century by the *Associated Press*.

<sup>465</sup> Johan Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (Oslo, London & Thousand Oaks, CA: International Peace Research Institute & Sage Publications, 1996).

significant roles in whether and how to resist oppressive powers in conflict situations. Particularly, Koh Myung-jin's *Ah, My Fatherland!* indicates there is an alternative way of political struggle—that is, “Resist to violence nonviolently!” It is valuable in a way in which it resonates with Jesus’ teaching on nonviolence and even his embracing of death through crucifixion. This is an alternative and possible way for building peace.

## CHAPTER 5. REMEMBERING PAINFUL HISTORY



Figure 8. “About 20,000 people gather at City Hall Plaza in front of the Provincial Government Office in Gwangju to hold the Grand National Rally for Democratization. The rally was followed by a torchlight march.” 16 May, 1980 / Photo by Na Kyung-taek

On 16<sup>th</sup> May, 1980, two days before the Gwangju Uprising occurred, about 20,000 people gathered at City Hall Plaza in front of the Provincial Government Office in Gwangju. The gathering was part of the Grand National Rally for Democratization, demanding the end of the military dictatorship. This “grand” people’s gathering represents a significant scene in the history of Korean democratization.

This photograph [Fig. 8] appears to have been captured from above, and at a distance. It is journalistic in style, in that it is professionally framed and manages to capture the historical moment, offering a memorable message to its audience. The rally was announced in advance, so the Photographer Na Kyung-taek was able to finish setting-up in good time and wait to capture the most visually striking moment. This is evident from the high quality nature of the image, it has a clear focus and is well-framed. The black-and-white style of the image dramatizes its mood of scene as calm, orderly, and even peaceful. It is important because the photograph contrasts with the

more typical images of atrocities during the Gwangju Uprising which occurred two days later.

At the center, four protesters are holding a giant national flag, *Taegeukki*, standing on the fountain of the plaza. *Taegeukki* is the item that citizens and protesters most often used for the rally. It symbolized national identity and recalled the foundational values of the nation. The *taegeuk* (yin-yang) symbol at the centre of the flag refers to peace and harmony—the spirit of the national foundation. Along with the yin-yang symbol of *Taegeukki*, audiences would find a large version of the yin-yang symbol. If you look at the image carefully, you would notice that the crowd of people make a big circle surrounding the fountain. It looks as if a grand yin-yang symbol is made by the people. The photograph suggests not only that the rally was peaceful; but also what the protesters wanted was peace, not violence.

I confess that, despite the depth of the image, I was less interested in this photograph than other photographs. The reason was simple. Firstly, I thought that the rally was less relevant since it happened two days before the actual Gwangju Uprising. Moreover, the picture does not portray any violence, conflict and suffering. The image of the peaceful rally was different from my stereotypical image of the Gwangju Uprising.

I came to focus on the photograph after the meeting with a man who worked as a researcher at the May 18 Memorial Foundation in Gwangju during my fieldwork in South Korea in 2014. This local researcher Mr. Ahn helped me in many ways as I was visiting the institution and collecting resources. When he showed me photographs, I asked him to select his favourite photograph, among the many, that best represents the Gwangju Uprising. He chose the photograph above [Fig. 8]. I was surprised because I never expected he would choose this image of a peaceful crowd. I asked why, then he replied: “I think this is the right image that shows who we are and what the Gwangju Uprising actually means.”

Mr. Ahn’s answer is important because it shows his way of understanding of the Gwangju Uprising. The way of understanding the event is closely connected to the central theme of this chapter: different ways of remembering painful history. His memory of the uprising is obviously different from my memory, because I mostly recollect the event through commonly recycled images of violence and suffering. In

fact, the images in my mind are not my memory of the actual demonstration because I was not there during the event. It is part of a cultural memory that I have learned through different media. By contrast with myself, Mr. Ahn has a different memory as he chose this photograph as the best image. It can be inferred that his way of seeing of the event is related to his way of remembering it. In other words, images of the past are a fundamental source of our remembering of the past.

It raises important questions regarding the relation between photography and memory: to what extent does photography relate to remembering painful history? What is the role of photograph(s) in the process of remembering the past? These are complex questions, not easy to answer: because, first, the concept of memory is confusing and complicated both at an individual and societal level. Second, their memory is based on traumatic experiences so that it should be considered carefully. Finally, the role of photography is ambivalent in terms of remembering and forgetting.

In the previous chapters, I have looked at different roles of photography in a conflict situation. In the Korean context, from the Gwangju Uprising (1980) to the June Uprising (1987), photograph(s) played a number of different roles, including as a tool for revealing truth (Ch. 2), representing the victim's suffering (Ch. 3), and resisting violence nonviolently (Ch. 4). In this chapter, I will consider the role of photography in the aftermath of violent conflict, mainly focusing on the relationship between remembering and painful history. In attempting to examine the relationship between three subjects—memory, trauma, and photography, I will focus on the role of photography in the process of reconstruction of memory (identity). To do this, I first consider the concept of cultural memory (Maurice Halbwachs, Aleida and Jan Assmann); secondly, I will discuss the role of photography in the process of remembering; thirdly, I will examine the relation between memory and conflict focusing on trauma and healing; lastly, I will discuss Volf's understanding of "remembering rightly" as healing and reconciliation.

First of all, I begin to discuss the concept of memory, theories of cultural memory, and its implications for photography.

## 5.1 Theories of Cultural Memory

To explore the relation between memory, trauma and photography, we need to consider the concept of memory. The starting point is that memory is a “discursive construct”. As Astrid Erll argues, ‘memory is constituted differently in different contexts’ which can be linguistic, historical, social, national or disciplinary.<sup>466</sup> In this paper, I see memory as a cultural construct which is formed, changed, and shared by members of a society and which plays a discursive role as a source of meaning making in its socio-political context. I prefer to use the term “cultural memory” among the terminology of memory studies.<sup>467</sup> Cultural memory is neither the other of history nor the opposite of individual remembering. Rather, ‘it is the totality of the context within which such varied cultural phenomenon originate.’<sup>468</sup>

From a general perspective, *remembering* is a process and *memory* is the result of remembering. Memory itself is not observable but found ‘only through the observation of concrete acts of remembering in specific sociocultural contexts’.<sup>469</sup> In relation to memory, Erll points out two characteristics of remembering: its relationship to the present and its constructed nature.

Memories are not objective images of past perceptions, even less of a past reality. They are subjective, highly selective reconstructions, dependent on the situation in which they are recalled. *Re-membering* is an act of assembling available data that takes place in the present. Versions of the past change with every recall, in accordance with the changed present situation.<sup>470</sup>

Moreover, Erll asserts that remembering and forgetting are two sides of the same coin. Forgetting is ‘the very condition for remembering’ and ‘necessary for memory to

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<sup>466</sup> Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*, Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). 6.

<sup>467</sup> Similar terms of cultural memory are *collective memory* (Halbwachs 1941), *social memory* (Olick 2003), *accentuate amnesia, oblivion and social forgetting* (Huyssen 1995; Esposito 2008), *dynamic or performative acts of memory* (Irwin-Zarecka 1994; Bal, Crewe, and Spitzer 1999; Rigney 2005), and *cultural memory and the archive* (A. Assmann 2008).

<sup>468</sup> Erll, *Memory in Culture*. 8.

<sup>469</sup> Ibid.

<sup>470</sup> Ibid.

operate economically, for it to be able to recognize patterns.<sup>471</sup> In short, memory is like the umbrella that includes both remembering and forgetting. Moreover, memory is not fixed, but instead, it has been constantly constructed by the process of remembering and forgetting.

My aim in this chapter that follows is to explore the relation between memory and photography, by asking what is the role of photography in the process of (re)construction of memory? My contention is, since memory is perpetually constructing, a photograph(s) as a source of cultural memory can be used for remembering the painful past *rightly*.<sup>472</sup> In order to examine it, I will focus on the traumatic memory of the victims of the May 18 Gwangju Uprising and consider the meaning of *remembering painful memory rightly* with the concept of *healing* and *salvation*.

To do this, I will outline a brief sketch of theories of cultural memory such as *collective* and *cultural* memory, and *dynamic process* of memory. To discuss cultural memory, it would be necessary to go back to Maurice Halbwachs and his concept of collective memory.

### 5.1.1 Halbwachs on Collective Memory

The term “collective memory” was coined by French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945) who was a student of Emilie Durkheim and Henry Bergson. Halbwachs has been considered a foundational figure of modern memory studies, particularly since he wrote *On Collective Memory* (1941), which examined the interactions between memory and society.<sup>473</sup> Barbara A. Misztal asserts that:

Halbwachs’ ([1941] 1992) fundamental contribution to the study of social memory is the establishment of the connection between a social

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<sup>471</sup> Ibid.

<sup>472</sup> It is my intention to use the term “rightly” rather than “wisely” because I argue remembering the past wrong is an ethical matter as it is related to many important moral issues such as truth, forgiveness, and reconciliation. I will discuss further later in this chapter. I also note that “remembering the past wrong rightly” is coined by Miroslav Volf in Miroslav Volf, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006).

<sup>473</sup> Maurice Halbwachs and Lewis A. Coser, *On Collective Memory*, The Heritage of Sociology (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992).



group and collective memory. His assertion that every group develops a memory of its own past that highlights its unique identity is still the starting point for all research in the field.<sup>474</sup>

According to Halbwachs, 'collective memory is always "socially framed" since social groups determine what is "memorable" and how it will be remembered: 'The individual calls recollections to mind by relying on the frameworks of social memory.'<sup>475</sup> For instance, an individual memory of one's family member cannot be dissociated from the family memory. It means that all remembering exists in group settings and interacts with a society.<sup>476</sup> Halbwachs argues

One may say that the individual remembers by placing himself in the perspective of the group, but one may also affirm that the memory of the group realizes and manifests itself in individual memories.<sup>477</sup>

Halbwachs focuses on how memory forms a social identity. He argues that 'the persistence of memory, as the shared image of the past, which is part of group common consciousness, explains the group's continuity.'<sup>478</sup> For him, collective memory is "a record of resemblance" which makes the group remain in unity. Drawing upon Halbwachs, Misztal focuses on the process of formation of social identity through "solidarity" and "continuity":

Collective identity precedes memory, therefore social identity determines the content of collective memory. Collective memory, being both a shared image of a past and the reflection of the social identity of the group that framed it, views events from a single committed perspective and thus ensures solidarity and continuity. It seems that Halbwachs' concern with the Durkheimian conception of solidarity and moral consensus leads him to argue that a group's memory is a manifestation of their identity.<sup>479</sup>

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<sup>474</sup> Barbara A. Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering* (Maidenhead, PA: Open University Press, 2003). 51.

<sup>475</sup> Halbwachs and Coser, *On Collective Memory*. 182 (Recited in Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*.)

<sup>476</sup> Jeffrey K. Olick, *States of Memory : Continuities, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection*, Politics, History, and Culture (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003). 6.

<sup>477</sup> Halbwachs and Coser, *On Collective Memory*. 40.

<sup>478</sup> Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*. 52.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid.

For Halbwachs, therefore, collective memory is a foundational condition of social identity. He illustrates 'a link between collective memory and social solidarity on a national scale by showing that shared stories define the nature and boundaries of entire societies to whom the stories belong.'<sup>480</sup>

Halbwachs distinguishes between memory and history as mutually exclusive. He stresses that 'general history starts only when tradition ends and the social memory is fading or breaking up.'<sup>481</sup> While history deals with past, as Astrid Erll notes, collective memory interacts with the present.

Collective memory, in contrast, is oriented towards the needs and interests of the group in the present, and thus proceeds in an extremely selective and reconstructive manner. Along the way, what is remembered can become distorted and shifted to such an extent that the result is closer to fiction than to past reality. Memory thus does not provide a faithful reproduction of the past – indeed, quite the opposite true: 'A remembrance is in very large measure a reconstruction prepared, furthermore, by reconstructions of earlier periods wherein past images had already been altered' (Halbwachs 1980: 68).<sup>482</sup>

Unlike *written* history, for Halbwachs, collective memory is *changeable* by the members of a group so that it can be distorted and shifted. It is important in the way it offers a theoretical basis: collective memory is a socially constructed output. More importantly, collective memory interacts with one's identity by providing the unity and particularity of the group. In this way, remembering the past becomes a pivotal practice to sustain a group identity.

However, Halbwachs' notion of collective memory is often criticized for its inconcreteness and lack of clarity (Gedi and Elam 1996; Osiel 1997; Klein 2000).<sup>483</sup> 'While Halbwachs was right to say that social groups construct their own images of the world by establishing an agreed version of the past', as Mitzal argues, 'he failed to explain how the dynamics of collective memory work.' Mitzal continues,

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<sup>480</sup> Ibid.

<sup>481</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980). 78.

<sup>482</sup> Erll, *Memory in Culture*. 17.

<sup>483</sup> Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam, "Collective Memory: What Is It?," *History and Memory* 8, no. 1 (1996). Mark Osiel, *Mass Atrocity, Collective Memory, and the Law* (New Brunswick, NJ; London: Transaction Publishers, 1997). Kerwin Lee Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse," *Representations* 69 (2000).

His effort to combine personal images and social manifestations of ideas has not resulted in a clear theory capable of explaining the way collective memory is formed. Halbwachs' belief in the power of society to shape individual memory neglects the dialectical tensions between personal memory and the social construction of the past.<sup>484</sup>

Since Halbwachs puts 'too much emphasis on the collective nature of social consciousness and disconnects it from the actual thought process of any particular individual', it leads him to overlook other functions of collective memory such as dialogue, interdependence and conflict with the tradition of the main collectivity.<sup>485</sup> In other words, Halbwachs' collective memory is unable to explain the dynamic process of reconstruction of a group's identity since there exists only a unitary form of memory that corresponds with a group identity.

In relation to the topic of this chapter, according to Halbwachs, the Gwangju citizens' identity who share the memory of the uprising should be determined as a singular and unitary form. However, there is no unitary theory that explains the uprising completely. It also cannot explain the different evaluations of the event. The identity of the Gwangju Uprising has been reconstructed over and over in a tension of different stakeholders.<sup>486</sup> In the dynamic process of seeking their *right* identity, I argue, memory plays a pivotal role. Depending on what and how to remember, their identity would be changed. Although Halbwachs stresses the interdependence of memory and social identity, he overlooks *how* memory functions in the formation of identity.

In response to the critiques of collective memory, scholars try to examine the dynamic process of the re-construction of a social identity. Among different theories, I will focus on the concept of "cultural memory", mainly drawing upon Aleida and Jan Assmann.

### 5.1.2 Assmann on Cultural Memory

The concept of "cultural memory" was introduced by German sociologist and

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<sup>484</sup> Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*. 54-55.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid. 55.

<sup>486</sup> It will be discussed later in this chapter.

anthropologists Aleida and Jan Assmann in the late 1980s.<sup>487</sup> It is arguably considered as the most influential approach to contemporary memory studies at least in the German-speaking world.<sup>488</sup> A. and J. Assmann are influenced by two main figures of memory studies, Maurice Halbwachs and Aby Warburg.

Aby Warburg (1866-1929) was a German art and cultural historian and considered to be one of forefathers of memory studies. Warburg was interested 'in a memory of art, in the readoption of vivid images and symbols in different epochs and cultures (Gombrich 1986; Ginzburg 1989; Woodfield 2001).'<sup>489</sup> Warburg sees the symbol as a cultural "energy store" and culture relies upon the memory of symbols. He called the concept of a cultural memory of images as "social memory" which he first used in the field (Kany 1987; Ferretti 1989; Michaud 2004).<sup>490</sup>

Although the concept of "cultural memory" is basically based on both Halbwachs and Warburg, Jan Assmann develops the concept with greater sophistication. In his article "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity" (1995), Jan Assmann starts his argument by posing the problem of the concepts of Halbwachs and Warburg:

Their [Halbwachs' and Warburg's] otherwise fundamentally different approaches meet in a decisive dismissal of numerous turn-of-the-century attempts to conceive collective memory in biological terms as an inheritable or "racial memory,"<sup>491</sup> a tendency which would still obtain, for instance, in C. G. Jung's theory of archetypes.<sup>492</sup> Instead, both Warburg and Halbwachs shift the discourse concerning collective

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<sup>487</sup> The term "cultural memory" is coined by A. and J. Assmann but its meaning and uses of the term are slightly different from the use of contemporary scholars. While Assmanns indicate it as a mediated and ritualized form of memory, others use the term to emphasize a complex and dynamic dimension of culture.

<sup>488</sup> Erll, *Memory in Culture*. 27.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid. 19.

<sup>490</sup> Ibid. 20.

<sup>491</sup> E. H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography*, ed. Fritz Saxl and Institute Warburg (London: The Warburg Institute, 1970). 323ff. (Recited from Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (1995).

<sup>492</sup> Warburg's most important source for his own theory of memory was Richard Semon. See Richard Semon, *Die Mneme als erhaltendes Prinzip im Wechsel des organischen Geschehens* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1920). (Recited from Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity."

knowledge out of a biological framework into a cultural one.<sup>493</sup>

To solve the problem, Jan Assmann distinguishes two forms of collective memory: one is *communicative memory* and the other is *cultural memory*. For Assmann, *communicative memory* is 'based on forms of everyday interaction and communication', while *cultural memory* is 'more institutionalized and rests on rituals and media'.<sup>494</sup> For Assmann, Halbwachs' idea is too broad to explain the memory-and-identity process:

... each individual composes a memory which, as Halbwachs has shown, is (a) socially mediated and (b) relates to a group. Every individual memory institutes itself in communication with others. These "others", however, are not just any set of people, rather they are groups who conceive their unity and peculiarity through a common image of their past.<sup>495</sup>

Drawing upon oral history studies, Assmann argues that the lifespan of a group's identity is based on *communicative memory* which does not last over three or four generations as maximum into the past.<sup>496</sup> In this way, the *communicative memory* cannot provide a fixed point 'which bind it to the ever expanding past in the passing of time;' on the other hand, *cultural memory* 'has its fixed point; its horizon does not change with the passing of time.'<sup>497</sup> Assmann continues:

These fixed points are fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance). We call these "figures of memory."<sup>498</sup>

In supplement and combination of Halbwachs and Warburg, Jan Assmann offers a better explanation of the relations between memory (the contemporized past), culture, and the group (society).<sup>499</sup> From these thoughts, he defines the concept of *cultural*

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<sup>493</sup> Ibid. 125.

<sup>494</sup> Erll, *Memory in Culture*. 28.

<sup>495</sup> Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity." 127.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid. 127.

<sup>497</sup> Ibid. 128-129.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid. 129. Jan Assmann sees the Jewish calendar as a prime example of figures of memory.

<sup>499</sup> Ibid.

memory as below:

The concept of cultural memory comprises that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose “cultivation” serves to stabilize and convey that society’s self-image. Upon such collective knowledge, for the most part (but not exclusively) of the past, each group bases its awareness of unity and particularity.<sup>500</sup>

Although Assmann’s notion of cultural memory clarifies two different modes of memory as *communicative* (everyday, oral, unofficial) and *cultural* (distant, written, official), the distinction is not always clear but ambiguously mixed in real life. Moreover, the casual relation between *communicative* and *cultural* memory is not in chronological order but can be reversible. Erll also argues that:

... the distinction between two modes rests not primarily on the *structure* of time (a universal, measurable category), but rather on the consciousness of time (a culturally and historically variable phenomenon of the mental dimension of culture). The criterion ‘consciousness of time’ also overrules the strict differentiation between the media associated with each of the two frameworks of memory. Neither is the production of communicative memory limited to orality, nor do all texts and images automatically belong to Cultural Memory. The deciding factor is rather the media *usage*.<sup>501</sup>

Focusing on the use of memory, Aleida Assmann suggests two modes of cultural memory such as memory as *ars* (functional memory) and *vis* (stored memory).<sup>502</sup> Unlike Jan Assmann, she focuses on how we *use* memory. She views, depending on our usage of memory, its nature and function can be changed. According to her,

The concept of memory as *ars* appears as a storehouse of knowledge, in which information can be deposited and later recalled in the same form. The concept of memory as *vis*, an anthropological ‘force’, in contrast, accentuates the temporal dimension and time’s transformative effect on the contents of memory, thus highlighting memory’s processual nature and its reconstructive activity. Memory as *vis* always also implies forgetting, since from the plethora of things that could be remembered only a few elements can be chosen which speak to the present situation.<sup>503</sup>

Aleida Assmann considers that these two areas of the cultural memory can be seen as

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<sup>500</sup> Ibid. 132.

<sup>501</sup> Erll, *Memory in Culture*. 32-33.

<sup>502</sup> Ibid. 34.

<sup>503</sup> Recited in Ibid. 35.

‘perspectival’. Depending one’s perspective, the use of memory can be changed. That is, *stored* memory can be a source of *functional* memory.

While the functional memory fulfils such important tasks as identity construction or the legitimization of an existing societal form, the stored memory is no less important. It serves as a ‘reservoir for future functional memories’, as a ‘resource for the renewal of cultural knowledge’ and thus as a ‘condition for the possibility of cultural change (A. Assmann 1999, 140).<sup>504</sup>

Aleida Assmann’s concept of cultural memory as *stored* and *functional* memory provides a flexible framework in dealing with memory of the past. ‘All objectivation with a given culture preserves now come into sight: not only the central “reusable” text, images, and rituals, but also documents stored in archives, long-forgotten works of art, scarcely heeded buildings, and so on.’<sup>505</sup> In some measure, therefore, A. Assmann’s concept of cultural memory provides a better explanation about the complex relation between memory and society, by allowing for ‘a description of the reservoirs, origins, dynamics, and changes of cultural recalls.’<sup>506</sup>

### 5.1.3 Photography as Source of Cultural Memory

So far, the ideas of collective memory and cultural memory have been considered briefly. To sum up, cultural memory, based on Halbwachs and the Assmanns, is a socially constructed output. It is not a *fixed* but rather *lived* form. It can be divided into *communicative* and *cultural* memory by its structure of memory; but the distinction is not always clear but ambiguous and even reversible. Hence, cultural memory should be understood, as Aleida Assmann argues, as a more flexible and dynamic concept. It can be used as *stored* and *functional* memory by members of society in a social context. It means memory is used not only for a tool of constructing a group identity but also a tool of *re*-constructing it. In other words, a group’s identity is formed, changed, and reconstructed by cultural memories.

Based on the concept of “cultural memory” as we have discussed, *I contend that a social identity can be reconstructed by the process of remembering.* In the

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<sup>504</sup> Recited in Ibid. 36.

<sup>505</sup> Ibid.

<sup>506</sup> Ibid. 37.

process of remembering, a photograph plays a critical role in the reconstruction of a social identity. It is important in a way in which a photograph can be a tool for remembering the painful history rightly through reconstructing its identity.

According to Halbwachs, collective memory is 'the creation of shared versions of the past, which results through interaction, communication, media, and institutions within small social groups as well as large cultural communities.'<sup>507</sup> In the process, the role of photographs is obvious. When it is argued that collective identity is formed and strengthened by sharing memories, photographs and its fixed images are fundamental resources of the memory.

Remembering Jan Assmann's distinction between *communicative* and *cultural* memory, photographs, particularly used by officially produced or mediated by the media, have the value and structure of *cultural* (official) memory. However, as we discussed earlier, cultural memory is not divided by its form or structure but by its usage. Photographs therefore can be used both as *stored* and *functional* memory. It is important as Aleida Assmann argues cultural memory and its usage can be changed depending on one's perspective. In other words, a photograph as a *functional* memory can be selectively remembered as time passed, although it was hardly remembered as a *stored* memory.

In this way, what and how to remember the past mainly depends upon how a society wants to remember. Since our memories are unstable, changeable, and easily distorted and manipulated, it is often criticized that memory can be misused for political purposes by offering a unitary narrative for a power group. Barbara Tint argues, 'one way societies merge their history into the collective memory of the members is through commemoration: the process of acknowledging, honoring, and recycling certain events of the past.'<sup>508</sup> In the process, photographs are used to strengthen the singular and stereotyped image of the past events.

For example, my stereotyped memory about the Gwangju Uprising is the influence of the Korean media. Through watching similar images repeatedly, I learn and imagine the past as a violent and horrible event. At least in the media context, we

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<sup>507</sup> Ibid. 15.

<sup>508</sup> Barbara Tint, "History, Memory, and Intractable Conflict," *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (2010). 242.



do not actually *remember* the past but *imagine* the past based on what we saw on the media outlet. If the act of remembering is related to what we see, the opposite way of approach is also possible. In short, a photograph can help *remembering painful history wisely*. In some cases, we can choose what we remember and how to remember by choosing which photographs to revisit and help us to commemorate the past insightfully. It offers a useful insight into how to reconstruct a better society in a post-conflict society.

## **5.2 Memory and Conflict**

### **5.2.1 Ambivalence of Remembering**

Remembering is critical in seeking justice and peace in the aftermath of violent conflict. George Santayana famously puts, ‘Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.’<sup>509</sup> Remembering helps us prevent the repetition of past wrongs. Particularly for those who experienced a violent conflict, remembering becomes more crucial because it is related to important issues such as truth, forgiveness and reconciliation. South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu asserts,

Forgiving is not forgetting; it’s actually remembering—remembering and not using your right to hit back. It’s a second chance for a new beginning. And the remembering part is particularly important. Especially if you don’t want to repeat what happened.<sup>510</sup>

Although the necessity of remembering the past wrong is normatively right, its concept and practices are not simple. Remembering can be distorted or manipulated by the political. The fundamental connection between memory and the nation (nationalism) is criticized that memory is used for forming the historical narrative as nationalism (Olick & Robbins 1998; Olick 2003). Cultural critics like Renan argue that forgetting is an essential tool for keeping history as one unitary memory, excluding other alternative options.<sup>511</sup> Pierre Nora (1992) puts that ‘the memory-nation in its

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<sup>509</sup> George Santayana, *The Life of Reason*, vol. I (New York,: Scribner, 1953). 397.

<sup>510</sup> Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999).

<sup>511</sup> Olick, *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection*.

ascendancy relied on national historical narratives to provide continuity through identity.<sup>512</sup> Some memories are chosen rather than remembered. These memories are “chosen traumas and chosen glories”<sup>513</sup> which are selectively remembered to hold groups of people together around their history. The chosen memories play a role of providing national narratives that further the political aims of the time (Connerton 1989; Zerubavel 1995; Pennebaker and Banaski 1997).<sup>514</sup>

Although remembering can be distorted and manipulated in the relation between memory and nation, remembering still plays a critical role in seeking justice and reconciliation. Furthermore, remembering is an ethical matter both at individual and societal levels because memory and conflict are intermingled within a social context. Memory studies provides meaningful insights in a (post) conflict society. It explains how memory works in the process of restoration of traumatic experience of those who were victimized by violence. Also, it would shed light on a post-conflict society what and how to remember the painful history.

The process of remembering is critical to our ability to perceive the world. Since memory ‘functions in every act of perception, in every act of intellection, in every act of language’ (Teridien 1993: 9), it is the fundamental condition of our cognition and judgment.<sup>515</sup> In other words, studying memory gives a better understanding of a society and a meaning system, because memory interacts with social discourses and frameworks. In this fashion, central to social science, the interest in the concept of memory as “commemoration” grew in the 1980s and the 1990s.<sup>516</sup> Recent scholarship in memory studies, as Barbara A. Misztal asserts, views ‘the construction of memory as a social and cultural process and analyzes institutions’ aims and operations responsible for that construction, while also examining objects, places

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<sup>512</sup> Ibid. 2.

<sup>513</sup> Volkan 1995, 1996

<sup>514</sup> Tint, "History, Memory, and Intractable Conflict." 243.

<sup>515</sup> Recited in Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*. 1.

<sup>516</sup> Ibid. 2.

and practices in which cultural memory is embodied.<sup>517</sup>

### 5.2.2 Memory in Conflict Resolution

The concept of memory as a social and cultural process gives a useful tool to peace and conflict studies. In her article, "History, Memory, and Intractable Conflict", Barbara Tint illustrates the importance of collective memory in dealing with intractable conflict.<sup>518</sup> In considering the relationship between memory and conflict, Tint highlights the following connecting points such as commemoration, identity, and emotions. For instance, she focuses on *commemoration* that often provides a politicized *narrative* for a group:

In many ways, conflict is seen as a story, narrative, or myth that frames the context in which it exists (Coleman 2004; Lederach 1997; Pearce and Littlejohn 1997). One way societies merge their history into the collective memory of the members is through commemoration: the process of acknowledging, honoring, and recycling certain events of the past.<sup>519</sup>

Along with *commemoration*, Tint also stresses *identity* as the second link between memory and conflict. Identity is a critical factor a reminder that 'a large majority of current world conflicts are identity-based.'<sup>520</sup> Tint argues that 'narratives are of utmost importance in the development of group identity; group narratives become the forum by which societies develop and maintain their identity (Deutsch 1973; Zerubavel 1995; Rose 1996; Conway 1997).'<sup>521</sup> More importantly, she emphasizes that traumatic memory has significant impact on a society in conflict:

Within the political domain of groups in conflict, a particular purpose of

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<sup>517</sup> Ibid. 3. For the general history and theories of social/cultural memory, see B. Zelizer, "Reading the Past against the Grain: The Shape of Memory Studies," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 12, no. 2 (1995); Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From "Collective Memory" to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," in *Annual Review of Sociology* (1998); Misztal, *Theories of Social Remembering*; and Erll, *Memory in Culture*.

<sup>518</sup> Tint, "History, Memory, and Intractable Conflict."

<sup>519</sup> Ibid. 242.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid. 244. See John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997).

<sup>521</sup> Tint, "History, Memory, and Intractable Conflict." 245.

memory cultivation is to strengthen a sense of nationalism and group identity (Balibar 1995; Conway 1997; Kelman 2001; Zerubabel 1995). [...] All collective traumas have some bearing on national identity; they can either strengthen or weaken a group identity, and be either be unifying or fragmenting (Neal 1998). The consequence of national traumas and how they ultimately have an impact on a society's development depends largely on how they are absorbed by the collective and how influential forces respond to or use these events.<sup>522</sup>

The link between traumatic memory and social identity is the central theme of this chapter. Identity is a key that leads us into a better understanding of the conflict. In the aftermath of the Gwangju Uprising, there has been a tension between different stakeholders who seek the right identity. Particularly, it is important to focus on the victims' memory as marginalized and traumatized because it is the key to restore the distorted memory and identity.

Another factor in intractable conflict is an emotional dimension. Emotion is fundamental in both memory and conflict studies because of the centrality of emotions in the process of memory recall: 'Research has indicated that highly charged emotional experiences tend to be recalled more frequently than ones without emotional intensity (Butler 1989; Christianson and Safer 1996; Siegel 1995; 1999). Tint expands this into collective levels:

In considering emotions as they are experienced collectively, we see their power in both creating and shifting group mood and consciousness. A traumatized society resembles a traumatized individual and exhibits many similar emotional difficulties, which manifest on the collective level. Violence can erupt from a strong combination of collective fear, anxiety, sadness, and anger (Neal 1998). Particularly relevant to the question of collective memory is the persistence of emotions; their intensity and volatility are enough to sustain over time and generations, long after cessation of the event that caused them.<sup>523</sup>

In the later part of her article, Tint puts the importance of memory in conflict resolution studies.<sup>524</sup> Kelman, for instance, stresses the issue of memory as 'something more malleable than the facts of history',

There is no question that ambitious, often ruthless, nationalistic leaders

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<sup>522</sup> Ibid.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid. 246-247.

<sup>524</sup> Ibid. 247-252.

manipulated memories in order to whip up public support for their projects. But the fact remains that these memories—and the associated sense of injustice, abandonment and vulnerability—are part of the people's consciousness and available for manipulation.<sup>525</sup>

Dealing with memory of the past, lastly, is important in the arena of reconciliation. Scholars and practitioners who emphasize reconciliation suggest that 'multiple layers in which the past must be accounted for in historical conflicts, including acknowledgement, apology, truth, justice, and reparations (Bloomfield 2001; Galtung 2001; Kriesberg 2001, 2004; Lederach 1997, 2001).'<sup>526</sup> Therefore, remembering the past rightly enables, as Ledearch argues, 'the ability to express the past while looking toward future.'<sup>527</sup> Reconciliation is essential for both individuals and societies to step towards the future. How does it mean for a society to reconcile with a painful history? How are remembering and reconciliation related? Tint relates memory with key issues of conflict studies such as narrative, identity, emotion, trauma, and reconciliation. In what follows, I will go further in our discussion, focusing on memory, trauma, and its healing as salvation.

### 5.3 Memory and Trauma

In his book *The End of Memory* (2006), Miroslav Volf carefully discusses the ethical roles of remembering in relation to reconciliation from a Christian perspective.<sup>528</sup> His main concern is not *whether* we should remember past wrongs; rather *how* to remember them and for what purpose.

So from the start, the central question for me was not *whether* to remember. I most assuredly would remember and most incontestably should remember. Instead, the central question was *how to remember rightly*. And given my Christian sensibilities, my question from the start was, How should I remember abuse as a person committed to loving the

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<sup>525</sup> Herbert C. Kelman, "Social Psychological Dimensions of International Conflict," in *Peacemaking in International Conflict*, ed. William Zartman (Washington, D.C.: USIP Press, 2007). 83. (Recited from Tint, "History, Memory, and Intractable Conflict." 250).

<sup>526</sup> Tint, "History, Memory, and Intractable Conflict." 251.

<sup>527</sup> Ibid.

<sup>528</sup> Volf, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*.

wrongdoer and overcoming evil with good?<sup>529</sup>

As Volf noted, it is a matter beyond whether to remember. Some memories are too painful to forget, particularly for those victimized by violent conflict like in the Gwangju Massacre. Focusing on unforgettable memory, Volf guides us into a deep level of the complex issues of remembering, by giving his own traumatic experience. He was born in Croatia in 1956, which was at the time a part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. His father was a minister at a charismatic Protestant church while Roman Catholic and Orthodox were dominant in Yugoslavia. He studied theology, philosophies, and politics. He is married to an American. His background history resulted in a tragic experience: He had been interrogated by the government because he was suspected of being a CIA spy who might be a threat to the state. He recollected his painful memory in a calm tone but it should be impossible if he is still suffering from the past.

Volf's story gives us a deep echo with important questions: How could a victim like Volf forget his past? And, more importantly, how could he forgive Captain G. who accused him? Responding to the questions, Volf emphasizes the importance of forgetting as well as remembering which is a way of healing and salvation from the traumatic memory. Before exploring the role of photographs in remembering painful history, it is necessary to understand the relations between memory, trauma, and salvation.

### **5.3.1 Trauma as Unforgettable Memory**

Some memories are too painful to forget such as violent conflict and war.<sup>530</sup> Slavoj Žižek points out that '[t]he essence of the trauma is precisely that it is too horrible to be remembered into our symbolic universe. All we have to do is mark repeatedly the

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<sup>529</sup> Ibid. 11.

<sup>530</sup> It would be meaningless to distinguish an individual and societal level because every memory primarily exists at individual level. At the same time, every individual memory cannot exist without social context. This is the main argument of Maurice Halbwachs' theory of collective memory. It will be considered later in this chapter.

trauma as such.<sup>531</sup> Painful memory is unforgettable like a trauma. Among many definitions in the trauma studies, Cathy Caruth describes

trauma as ‘an overwhelming experience of sudden, or catastrophic events, in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena.’<sup>532</sup>

How does Volf’s *remembering the past wrong rightly* relate to unforgettable memory as trauma? For Volf, remembering rightly refers to a status of freedom from the repeated memory with pain and images such as hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena. We do not have to endure all suffering repeatedly occurred by remembering.

When we argue that we should remember the past wrong, then, how long should we remember the past wrong? Particularly when the memory is traumatic, how long should we remember the painful memory? Volf uses Augustine’s account on two kinds of knowledge of sin. One is epistemological knowledge—to know what sin is from learning. The other is experiential knowledge—to know what sin is through committing sin. The first is like a medical doctor who knows about what a disease is. The latter is like a patient who suffers from the disease.<sup>533</sup>

In this fashion, Volf distinguishes two kinds of memory as *pleasant* and *painful* memory. While memory can multiply one’s pleasure by representing in mind into the present, it also can make us being obsessed by an enduring suffering. For Volf, it is the point of his argument on remembering, not whether to remember but whether to redeem suffering from the dark valley of painful memory.

Even if we doubt the reality of repression, as scholars increasingly do,<sup>534</sup> the point still stands: to remember suffering endured is to keep one’s wounds open. The larger the wound and the better the recollection, the

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<sup>531</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor*, Phronesis (London; New York: Verso, 1991). 272-273.

<sup>532</sup> Cathy Caruth, "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History," *Yale French Studies* 79 (1991). Recited from Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003). 38.

<sup>533</sup> Volf, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*. 22.

<sup>534</sup> See Richard J. McNally, *Remembering Trauma* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003).

more past and present merge and past suffering becomes present pain. If memory repeats and revives original suffering, how can salvation lie in memory?<sup>535</sup>

Volf's idea on memory and salvation mainly draws upon Elie Wiesel (1928-2016) who was a professor of Boston University for Jewish Studies, Nobel Prize Laureate and a Holocaust survivor.<sup>536</sup> After the Holocaust, Wiesel struggled with the memory of the Holocaust and the power of remembering, including his famous work, *Night* (1960).<sup>537</sup> At the German Reichstag in an address on 10<sup>th</sup> November, 1987, Wiesel said, 'We remember Auschwitz and all that it symbolizes because we believe that, in spite of the past and its horrors, the world is worthy of salvation; and salvation, like redemption, can be found only in memory.'<sup>538</sup> Both Wiesel and Volf are aware of the ambivalence of memory and its influence to human life. Nevertheless, they rather focus on a more important issue—how memory contributes to human flourishing.

... if memory of wrong suffered is integral to personal and social well-being but can also lead to the opposite, *how* should we remember for our memory to foster flourishing? At the periphery of his complex thought, Wiesel has raised such questions. To explore them is crucial, especially for those who, like me, believe with Wiesel in the redeeming power of memory.<sup>539</sup>

For Volf, like Wiesel, remembering the past rightly is a moral and spiritual matter. Also, it is an attempt to focus on the victim's perspective, particularly their pain and suffering in their traumatic memory. Having focused on their pain, it is important to find a way of healing and salvation toward seeking justice and reconciliation. It would give a better perspective to interpret the painful history, not by a one-sided and linear memory but holistic dimensions such as victims, social context, and even perpetrators.

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<sup>535</sup> Volf, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*. 22.

<sup>536</sup> Ibid. 20. Volf describes Wiesel as 'the person most eloquently exploring the memory of wrongdoing' among our contemporaries.

<sup>537</sup> Wiesel, *Night*.

<sup>538</sup> *From the Kingdom of Memory: Reminiscences*. 201.

<sup>539</sup> Volf, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*. 20.



### 5.3.2 The Traumatic Memory of the Gwangju May 1980

In the aftermath of the Gwangju Uprising, there were different attempts to interpret and evaluate the historical event (Kim Young-khee & Han Sun 2003; Kim Hong-gil 2007; Kim Hang 2011; Kim Hee-song 2015).<sup>540</sup> These articles basically show that there have been different historical evaluations and changes to the interpretation of the Gwangju Uprising. At the beginning, right after the event, there was a movement to seek the restoration of the dignity of the Gwangju citizens from ‘riots’ or ‘communists’ into democratic protesters who survived the massacre. Later, the direction of movement was to maintain that the Uprising was a unique and novel community movement, focusing on the particularity of the city of Gwangju. Recently, the movement is aiming to show it in a global context, by promoting the Gwangju as the city of democracy and peace in Asia. For instance, Choi Jung-woon, a professor of Seoul National University, tries to understand the Gwangju Uprising as an example of the “Absolute Community” that maintains the uprising was possible by the power of community rather than individuals.<sup>541</sup>

It is appropriate to see the memory of the Gwangju of May 1980 from a perspective of trauma. It provides a useful tool to understand not only a deep level of victims’ suffering but its cultural influence in the Korean society. The lens of trauma widens our understanding of the painful history from a victim’s perspective, transcending a linear way based on a national identity. It is particularly important to raise the voices of the marginalized in the reconstruction process after the uprising. Jenny Edkins criticizes a singular and linear interpretation of the past by and for the state:

After traumatic events, there is a struggle over memory. Some forms of remembering can be seen as ways of forgetting: ways of recovering from trauma by putting its lessons to one side, refusing to acknowledge that anything has changed, restoring the pretence. [...] In the most part,

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<sup>540</sup> Young-khee and Sun, "The Gwangju People's Uprising and the Construction of Collective Identity: A Study on the Fighters' Bulletin." Hong-gil, "A Study on the Reconstruction of Memorial Politics of Gwangju Peoples Uprising and Changes in Gwangju Community." Hang, "The Commemoration of the Gwangju Uprising: Of the Remnants in the Nation States' Historical Memory." Hee-song, "A Study on the Meaning and the Actualization of Gwangju Community May 1980."

<sup>541</sup> Choi Jung-Woon, *The Social Sciences On "May"* (Seoul: May Spring; Pulbit, 2012; 1999).

memorialization of war [or conflict] is a practice that reproduces stories of national glory and heroism. It produces linear time, the time of the state. But does it always do that? Is this contested? Don't these accounts have a far too unquestionably consensual view of the political community?<sup>542</sup>

Kim Hang also points out the necessity to stand in the “gray zone” to reconsider the Gwangju Uprising from different perspectives. Kim Hang argues that ‘the process of forming historical memories about the incident was not one matching the aspiration of them, because the process was strongly determined by the logic of the nation states that has defined the victims’ deaths in the incident as holy sacrifices dedicated to the nation state, and, in so doing, the officer has disappeared into oblivion in historical memories.’<sup>543</sup> Thus, it is necessary to inquire how to overcome a linear way of remembering of the event.

Observing other dimensions than a national perspective would be a way of overcoming the linear memory of history. I argue that focusing on a victim’s perspective, especially their suffering in memory, provides a holistic vision of the painful memory. *Re-thinking* the painful memory as trauma is a key practice of remembering it rightly. A Korean novelist Lim Cheol-woo is the one who reconsiders the May 18 Gwangju Uprising through the lens of trauma.

### 5.3.3 Traumatic Memory in Lim Cheol-Woo’s Novels

The traumatic memory of the Gwangju May 1980 is dominant in Lim Cheol-woo’s novels.<sup>544</sup> In his novels, Lim Cheol-woo unveils the unfocused people and unsolved issues of the Gwangju Uprising. He brings victims onto the stage and represents their suffering which had been disregarded. The unsolved and unforgettable memories appear as forms of the marginalized like the sick and the cursed. Han Soon-mi, in her

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<sup>542</sup> Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*. 16.

<sup>543</sup> Kim Hang, "The Commemoration of the Gwangju Uprising: Of the Remnants in the Nation States' Historical Memory." 614.

<sup>544</sup> Lim Chul-woo is a Korean writer and professor at Hanshin University in Korea. Lim Chul-woo was born in Cholla-province and lived in Gwangju since his age at 10. He was awarded several prizes such as the 17<sup>th</sup> Korean Creative Writing Prize for *The Land of My Father* (1985) and the 12<sup>th</sup> Yi Sang Literary Award for *The Red Room* (1988). He wrote many novels related to the Gwangju Uprising such as *Father’s Land* (1984), *Missing the South* (1985), *Red Mountain*, *White Bird* (1990), *I Want to Go to the Island* (1991), *Spring Day* (1997), and *Centenary Motel* (2004).

article “The Ritual for Historical Remembrance and Oblivion of the Margin – Narrative and the Meaning in Depth in Works of Lim Cheol-woo”, describes the style of Lim’s novels:

Repetitively drawing the pain of Gwangju into the present sphere, Lim extends the pain of Gwangju to the one of the whole history ever since the Liberation. Lim also places an emphasis on the historical experiences of the marginal existences such as children, women, and old people, who easily end up being subjects to oblivion of people due to their not being included in the official history. In addition to this trait, Lim’s novel requires pondering over the narrative which reveals historical trauma through repetitive images, emotion, space, story and characters of especially elevated complexities on the concept of “Curse”, image of “Stigma”, and the “Native land” as primary setting.<sup>545</sup>

Lim Cheol-woo witnessed the Gwangju Uprising. The traumatic experience affected his writings. For Lim, the “red blood” and the “reddish blood stain” of the days remained an unforgettable memory of curse like a stigma carved on a body. Whenever he recollected the time, he could not help but feel oppressed a sense of guilt as he survived. He personally confesses that he is not ready for either forgiveness or reconciliation. For Lim, the May of Gwangju is not the past completed in history but a peak point of the constantly repeated symptoms after the division of the South and North in the Korean peninsula. His painful memory leads him to seek to find the fundamental root of violence that has been repeated in Korean history.<sup>546</sup>

His understanding of traumatic memory can be summarized as *resentment* and *curse*. It can be found that Lim Cheol-woo repeatedly used the emotional theme of resentment and curse in his writings.<sup>547</sup> For instance, Han Soo-mi focuses on the “camellia flower” episode which repeatedly appeared in both of his books, *Red Mountain* (1990) and *I Want to Go to the Island* (1991). Han Soo-mi interprets the characters of a “commie” and “leper” in the episodes as a symbol of self-identity who is cursed with stigma and marginalized as the other in the society.<sup>548</sup> In other words,

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<sup>545</sup> Han Soon-mi, "The Ritual for Historical Remembrance and Oblivion of the Margin: Narrative and the Meaning in Depth in Works of Lim Cheol-Woo," [The Korean People and Culture.] *Hanguk Minjok Munhwa* 38, no. 11 (2010). p. 190 (English Abstract).

<sup>546</sup> Ibid. 164.

<sup>547</sup> Ibid. 166.

<sup>548</sup> Ibid.

Lim Cheol-woo attempts to represent the victims' pain and trauma of the Gwangju Uprising through the characters like commie and leper who are cursed and marginalized by society.

It is noteworthy that traumatic memory results in resentment and curse relates to the formation of the self-identity at least in the novels. The commie and leper characters represent the traumatic memory of victims and their self-understanding. Moreover, the concept of *resentment* and *curse* is a spiritual concept, particularly based on Korean shamanism. It reflects the shamanistic idea that one who died with resentment becomes an evil ghost wandering this world, not being able to enter heaven. Thus, Lim Choel-woo's characters and narratives resonates to Korean society with important questions: How (not) to remember the victims of the Gwangju Uprising and their suffering; and how can their traumatic memory be redeemed? Han Soo-mi also interprets Lim Cheol-woo's main thesis as a matter how to remember/forget historical trauma.

Lim's novels [are] labeled to implicate paradox, which asserts that we are to remember in order to be completely oblivious. It aims at the genuine oblivion via repeating the historical trauma borne by the marginal existences and resisting complete wiping out.<sup>549</sup>

In sum, so far, I have argued that remembering the past wrong is normatively right but it is not simple; rather, it is more important how to remember it rightly. Some memories are too painful to forget like the tragedy of the 1980 Gwangju Massacre. The memory of the time is not only *painful* but *unforgettable* which is a symptom of trauma. In this respect, remembering painful history rightly relates to the question how to deal with the traumatic memories of victims. In a similar fashion, Lim Cheol-woo's novels focus on the traumatic memory of the victims of the Gwangju Uprising, using the image of stigma of curse of the margin of society. It leads us to reconsider how to remember painful history rightly because remembering also relates to healing and salvation from the trauma.

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<sup>549</sup> Ibid. 191.

## 5.4 Memory, Identity, and Healing

We have discussed how to remember the past wrong rightly if it is like a trauma. Since the traumatic memory like in the Gwangju Uprising is painful and unforgettable, the act of remembering can be a tool of sustaining and strengthening the pain of the victims. Therefore, the way of remembering should be an act for healing and salvation from the traumatic memory. But, then, how can healing and salvation of traumatic memory be possible? In her writing “The Role of Identity Reconstruction in Promoting Reconciliation,” Donna Hicks, professor at Harvard Divinity School, raises two important points: One is *reconstruction of identity* and the other is *forgiveness and healing*.<sup>550</sup>

### 5.4.1 Reconstruction of Identity

Drawing upon developmental theories like Jean Piaget, Hicks attempts to understand trauma as a threat to one’s inner stability which breaks our normal mechanisms to interact with the world—that is, a meaning-making system:

From developmental perspective, one could argue that the threats experienced by parties in conflict are experienced not only as threats to one’s identity, or our collection of beliefs about who we are, but more broadly a threat to the way we maintain our inner sense of coherence and stability. In so doing, the threat not only challenges the beliefs we hold about ourselves (our identity), but how we arrive at those beliefs, and how we ultimately use those beliefs as stabilizing mechanisms that allow us to function in the world. Furthermore, it challenges our evaluation of the “rightness” of those beliefs.<sup>551</sup>

Those threats, as Hicks argues, become ‘*a threat to one’s integrity*, as the sum total our understanding of the self and the world’.<sup>552</sup> What particularly concerns Hicks regarding the traumatic threat is its disintegration between oneself and the world. According to her, trauma automatically operates one’s self-protective mechanism,

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<sup>550</sup> Donna Hicks, "The Role of Identity Reconstruction in Promoting Reconciliation," in *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, ed. Raymond G. Helmick S.J. and Rodney L. Petersen (Philadelphia, PA; London: Templeton Foundation Press, 2002).

<sup>551</sup> Ibid. 141.

<sup>552</sup> Ibid. 142.

shutting down doors to interact with others and the world. In the mechanism, she argues, ‘beliefs about the self and the other become frozen. These “frozen beliefs” (images of self and others) act as stabilizing forces that firmly anchor oneself so that one does not revert back to the terrifying threat.’<sup>553</sup>

To fix the broken mechanism, Hicks suggests a process of negotiation to reconstruct one’s identity and one’s perspective of the world. ‘What we end up negotiating are,’ she argues, ‘the conditions under which one would be willing to open oneself up to new information, information that could change not only one’s existing beliefs about the other but of oneself as well.’<sup>554</sup> In the negotiation process, as Hicks argues, there are asked different efforts from both the “high power group” (Track One) and “low power group” (Track Two):<sup>555</sup>

It is necessary for the high power group to come to terms with the consequences of maintaining a dominance relationship, insofar as they have denied the low power group their human dignity and rights as a people. They need to accept that, as a result of their domination, they caused immeasurable suffering and humiliation for the low power group.<sup>556</sup>

For high power group, it would be difficult to accept “the not-so-righteous aspects of one’s group identity” as being one of perpetrators who traumatized others and their human dignity. However, Hicks stresses that the role of the low power group as victims is more difficult. To reconstruct a new identity for reconciliation and co-existence, she insists, ‘the low power group will have to let go their “victim” identity, which would require them to relinquish the moral advantage that has been the source of their power for duration of the conflict.’<sup>557</sup> It seems a very difficult task for the traumatized if it is

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<sup>553</sup> Ibid.

<sup>554</sup> Ibid.

<sup>555</sup> Ibid. 143-4. Hicks uses the term the “Track One and Two model” which is commonly used in the peacebuilding field. The Track Two model would provide a clear distinction between a dominant group and oppressed group and its structural tension. However, the Track Two model can be misread as a dualistic understanding of conflict since it dominantly emphasizes a political dimension. Hence, recent scholarship maintains the need for a more sophisticated approach, that is, the Multi-Track model. See Louise Diamond and John W. McDonald, *Multi-Track Diplomacy: A Systems Approach to Peace*, 3rd ed., Kumarian Press Books for a World That Works (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1996).

<sup>556</sup> Hicks, "The Role of Identity Reconstruction in Promoting Reconciliation."

<sup>557</sup> Ibid. 144.

not impossible. Hicks is also aware of the issue but asserts it is essential for reconciliation:

Some believe that this is too much to ask of the victimized group. Is it even humanly possible to rehumanize the other that has dehumanized you? Perhaps this is the core of the issue. A necessary condition for reconciliation is the restoration of humanity: restoring human dignity to both the victim and the victimizer. (144)

For Hicks, human dignity is the key to restoration and reconciliation from painful memory. In this way, *remembering the painful history rightly* means restoring one's human dignity and reconciling both the victims and victimizers. Then, how can the restoration of humanity be possible? Human dignity is not automatically given; but instead, it can be gained through multiple efforts such as structural change, political changes, and psychological changes.<sup>558</sup> This is why Hicks emphasizes the psychological shift for reconstructing a new identity.

#### 5.4.2 Forgiveness and Healing

As we have discussed earlier, traumatic memories like the Gwangju Uprising are necessarily accompanied with emotional symptoms. To restore human dignity for reconciliation, then, emotional (psychological) healing should be involved in the negotiation process. In his book *The Ethics of Memory*, Avishai Margalit argues that "sensibility" (feelings) is an essential component of the memory of a past event. He notes that the feeling like amazement or horror always accompanies the memory of those who watched the collapse of the Twin Towers in New York.<sup>559</sup> As Miroslav Volf also claims, 'Memories of suffering unaccompanied by corresponding feelings of pain or deep sympathy inevitably involve forgetting.'<sup>560</sup> Volf continues:

With regard to salvation, the excision from memory of a pain endured is as significant as remembering the event that caused the pain. If well-being lies in memory, then must the memory not be of the kind that at its heart includes the forgetting of pain? For surely, as long as the pain

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<sup>558</sup> Ibid.

<sup>559</sup> Avishai Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002). 62-63.

<sup>560</sup> Volf, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*. 23.

is felt salvation remains incomplete.<sup>561</sup>

In the relationship between a perpetrator and victim, how can emotional healing be possible? To reconstruct one's broken identity, what sort of efforts would be needed? Would it be possible to reconstruct one's memory without an emotional shift? Regarding these questions, Hicks emphasizes the importance of forgiveness as a way of psychological shift.

Forgiveness is a key practice in the process of reconstruction of painful memory. Desmond Tutu has argued that forgiveness is the only way to restore human dignity and a relationship that has been damaged and violated by conflict.<sup>562</sup> Hicks maintains the necessity of forgiveness for both groups. She argues that 'the low power group would have to forgive the high power group and the high power group would have to forgive itself.'<sup>563</sup> However, forgiveness is not a simple task since no one can force it. She continues to argue:

Although it may very well be true that forgiveness not only helps free the victimizer of and shame and the burden of wrongdoing, but can also liberate the victim,<sup>564</sup> the problem is that it cannot be forced.<sup>565</sup>

Scholars like Susan Dwyer argue that forgiveness is not necessary in the reconciliation process.<sup>566</sup> This perspective primarily focuses on the epistemological level. In other words, the negotiation process focuses on how to change the perception of the past and interpret it into a new meaning. 'The task of reconciliation,' from this perspective, 'is to create the conditions so that the two former enemies could develop a "mutually tolerable" interpretation of events.' For Dwyer, a tension is not avoidable or removable. Rather, she aims to 'incorporate the source of those tensions—the trauma, the

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<sup>561</sup> Ibid. 24.

<sup>562</sup> Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness*. (Recited in Hicks, "The Role of Identity Reconstruction in Promoting Reconciliation." 144.)

<sup>563</sup> Hicks, "The Role of Identity Reconstruction in Promoting Reconciliation." 144.

<sup>564</sup> R. D. Enright, S. Freedman, and J. Rique, "The Psychology of Interpersonal Forgiveness," in *Exploring Forgiveness*, ed. R. Enright and J. North (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999). (Recited in Ibid. 145)

<sup>565</sup> Hicks, "The Role of Identity Reconstruction in Promoting Reconciliation." 144-145.

<sup>566</sup> Susan Dwyer, "Reconciliation for Realists," *EIA Ethics & International Affairs* 13, no. 1 (1999). 81-98.



humiliation, the violations of one's dignity—into a new way of holding them in one's identity such that it does not cause psychological disintegration for either party.<sup>567</sup>

Dwyer's argument seems right in theory. However, it is important to remember that trauma and its symptom are not easily controlled—rather, it is beyond one's control. 'When one's narrative has been challenged by a traumatic assault,' as Hicks argues, 'it cannot be rectified by simply engaging in an epistemological exercise of reconstructing the narrative.' Like an injury, painful memory as trauma requires healing, particularly psychological symptoms. To get to a truly "mutually tolerable" interpretation of events, therefore, 'requires a much deeper process that addresses the needs for healing and recovery of the assault to one's dignity.'<sup>568</sup> Furthermore, we may not force forgiveness to the victimized but we can and should encourage forgiveness for fuller restoration and reconciliation by providing social conditions.<sup>569</sup>

#### 5.4.3 Volf's Healing of Memory

Croatian theologian Miroslav Volf is one of those who seek and believe fuller restoration and reconciliation is possible. He wrote *The End of Memory* (2006) as a series of his works on forgiveness and reconciliation following after *Embrace and Exclusion* (1999) where he sought healing and reconciliation with the other beyond hatred and exclusion. Volf uses the term "rightly" which refers to his understanding of the aim of remembering as healing and reconciliation. He argues that *remembering rightly* should be right to both the perpetrator and the victim, and both at individual and societal level. He is aware of the complexity of remembering and its social function:

Remembering rightly the abuse I suffered is not a private affair even when it happens in the seclusion of my own mind. Since others are always implicated, remembering abuse is of public significance.<sup>570</sup>

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<sup>567</sup> Hicks, "The Role of Identity Reconstruction in Promoting Reconciliation." 145-146.

<sup>568</sup> Ibid. 146.

<sup>569</sup> Since this chapter focuses on remembering, I will not go further into the topic of forgiveness here. Instead, I will consider the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation in the next chapter.

<sup>570</sup> Volf, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*. 11-12.

Volf himself had been abused by Captain G., which was a painful memory. Nevertheless, he understands that what happened to him was not a private affair but a socially embedded affair. Likewise, remembering abuse is also a public affair. Volf maintains that the end of remembering should be right to all stakeholders such as the wronged person, the wide social setting, and the wrongdoer.<sup>571</sup> To discuss fuller restoration and reconciliation, he raises significant theological questions: if Christ dies for all, then does it include the wrongdoer as well? What does Christianity teach on remembering the past? Can it be right to both the wronged and the wrongdoer? Does salvation include memory of the past? Can our (and the other's) memory be redeemed?<sup>572</sup>

Regarding the questions, Christian teaching seems radically clear. God's salvation is for all people without exclusion. It is clear in the New Testament. In 2 Corinthians 5:14-19, for example, Saint Paul the Apostle teaches the salvation of Christ is for all, which is his core vision and vocation in his life:

14 For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. 15 And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. (NRSV)

For Paul, the work of Christ is for all, no one is excluded by their ethnicity, gender, and social class (Gal. 3:28). This should then include the victim and victimizer. However, considering the painful memory, from a victim's perspective, it would never be easy to accept that the work of Christ is for both victims and perpetrators.

Elie Wiesel claimed the necessity of 'salvation in memory' for the victims of Auschwitz. It was not a normative or epistemological argument but rather an existential question on one's misery: why has the horrific event happened? Passing through his darkest night, he had to bear unbearable suffering. For the painful memory, as we discussed, it would be too painful to forget like a trauma. In spite of the painful past, his optimistic vision of the past and future deeply resonates to our society:

We remember Auschwitz and all that it symbolizes because we believe

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<sup>571</sup> Ibid. 12-14.

<sup>572</sup> Ibid. 15.

that, in spite of the past and its horrors, the world is worthy of salvation; and salvation, like redemption, can be found only in memory.<sup>573</sup>

What does it mean that salvation lies in memory? How does it affect people with painful memories? In response to these questions, Volf also focuses on identity and its relationship with memory. Since memory is central to identity, he argues, memory critically affects the formation of one's identity. It is particularly significant when memory is painful. Volf continues:

To the extent that we sever ourselves from memories of what we have done and what has happened to us, we lose our true identity. If suffering has been part of our past, pain will be part of our identity. [...] So salvation lies in memory insofar as that memory prevents us from distorting our essential selves and living a lie.<sup>574</sup>

For Volf, wholeness of memory is essential to healing of identity. Whereas our identity can be distorted by painful memories in the past, it can be restored by remembering painful memories rightly. More importantly, Volf stresses that we ourselves are the active agents of change:

We are not just shaped *by* memories, we ourselves *shape* the memories that shape us. We can react to our memories and shape them, we are larger than our memories.<sup>575</sup>

Moreover, the perception of ourselves as the active agent also brings positive change to our future. In other words, recovery and freedom from traumatic memory is critical for salvation in painful memory:

A person with a healthy sense of identity living in freedom and security will let the future draw her out of the past and the present and will play with new possibilities and embark on new paths. With regard to our past, present, and future, then we are a great deal more than our memories, and how memories shape our identity depends not only on the memories themselves but also on what we and others do with those memories.<sup>576</sup>

For Volf, psychological wellbeing is fundamental to salvation in memory. He views ourselves as active agents of change for both the past and future. Whereas, the status of being oppressed by traumatic memories is unhealthy and needs to be healed. Hence,

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<sup>573</sup> Elie Wiesel, *From the Kingdom of Memory: Reminiscences* (New York: Summit, 1990), 201.

<sup>574</sup> Volf, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*. 24.

<sup>575</sup> Ibid. 25.

<sup>576</sup> Ibid. 25-26.

the healing of painful memory restores our wellbeing and, more fundamentally, who we are. Theologically, we humanity are created as the image of God. Healing traumatic memories and restoring our identity as the image of God is intrinsically tied to the matter of salvation.

It is reminiscent of Paul's Letter to Corinthians as I mentioned earlier. In 2 Corinthians 5:16-19, Paul stresses that the salvation of Christ not only changes the past but transforms everything.

16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. 17 So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. (2 Corinthians 5:14-19, NRSV)

From a Christian perspective, Volf shows how memory connects to identity and why it is important to restore traumatic memory, that is, the restoration of human wellbeing. Particularly, as seen in Paul's Letter to Corinthians, the belief in the salvation of Christ for all would contribute to how to remember painful history wisely and rightly.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

We have discussed remembering painful history from different perspectives. We have looked at the concept of cultural memory and how it is constructed and reconstructed in a social context by an act of remembering. We have also considered how cultural memory interrelates to one's identity as identity is the key of most cases of conflict. Particularly, when the memory is painful like trauma, the act of remembering should be approached wisely—more correctly, *rightly*. Remembering is critical in seeking justice and reconciliation because it relates to fundamental ethical issues such as truth, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

As Volf argues, we are not just shaped by memory but we also shape our memory so that we can react to painful memories and change them into a better future. Thus, remembering can be an important practice to form our identity and transform our future. In other words, we can choose what to remember and how to remember. It

can be applied to not only the spectators who watched a past event in proximity but also the distant observers who see the images of the past through media outlets like photographs.

It can also be applied to media audiences today. In his book *Media Violence and Christian Ethics*, Jolyon Mitchell compares two types of audiences of violent news such as viewers in proximity and in distance.<sup>577</sup> It is important to note the distant audiences are more exposed and influenced by the media representations. Considering that media witnessing significantly affects our memory of the event, an alternative role of audiences is required in watching violent news. Christians can participate in the process of remembering wisely and rightly by choosing how to remember.

In this way, Christian communities can play a significant role by remembering painful history wisely and rightly. Remembering is an important spiritual practice for Christian communities. Christians gather for Communion in remembrance of Christ who sacrificed for all (1 Cor. 11:24-25). As Johann Baptist Metz argues, it can be “dangerous memory” if they use the memory to exclude the others who do not share it.<sup>578</sup> Nevertheless, the essence of remembering Christ during Communion symbolizes inclusion rather than exclusion as we all are new creatures in Christ—including our memory.

More practically, remembering can be a social practice in Christian communities. Mitchell suggests that worship can provide a space for remembering painful history rightly. By paying attention to a reality beyond the mere recall of violent images, he argues, it can lead towards peaceful action. ‘Communities of memory can provide a context in which Christians gather and together remember that the violent images and narratives sometimes swirling about their imaginations are neither the only story nor the end of the story.’<sup>579</sup> When the media focus on sensational images of violence and produce a dualistic frame of a conflict, Christian communities rather remember the others who are excluded and forgotten in the media outlet, particularly

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<sup>577</sup> Mitchell, *Media Violence and Christian Ethics*. 25-31.

<sup>578</sup> Ibid. 45-47.

<sup>579</sup> Ibid. 57.

the victimized and their suffering. When we remember “them” in our worship, it can be a powerful alternative for the painful past.

As memory is not fixed but kept reconstructed by members of a society, the Christian community can play an alternative role of audience by remembering painful history rightly. It seems true as we are exposed by more images of the traumatic past but become more numbed for other’s pain. In some sense, as Barbie Zelizer famously puts, we maybe keep “remembering to forget” by witnessing numerous images.<sup>580</sup> On the contrary, remembering through a photograph like Fig. 8 can be a tool of reconstruction of our distorted identity. The Christian community, particularly, can be an alternative audience by remembering the painful past for the suffering and the forgotten, and for healing of pain and a better future.

How does photography contribute to remembering the painful past rightly? As we have seen through the chapter, photography plays a critical role in forming our collective memory and identity. Moreover, our collective memory and identity can be reconstructed by the process of remembering. At the beginning of the chapter, I mentioned that my memory was different from Mr. Ahn who worked at the organization. Mr. Ahn’s memory can be expanded to a collective level. It represents the new identity of the Gwangju Uprising. For example, the image [Fig. 8] appears as one of the top images in the introduction page of the event on the website.<sup>581</sup> Moreover, the picture was used as the first image of the photobook *May 1980 Gwangju, We Saw!* (2004).<sup>582</sup>

These examples reflect that the memory of 1980 Gwangju Uprising was reconstructed by remembering through the photograph [Fig. 8]. The photograph indicates that the event was not merely a violent massacre and they were not powerless victims. Rather, what the image symbolizes is that it was a peaceful and powerful memory of Korean democracy. This way of interpretation provides a new identity with pride and dignity.

In spite of the advantages, however, the photograph has limitations: does the

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<sup>580</sup> Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera's Eye*.

<sup>581</sup> The May 18 Memorial Foundation, "Remember the May 18 Democratic Movement ". (Accessed 20 December 2017)

<sup>582</sup> The May 18 Memorial Foundation, *May 1980 Gwangju, We Saw!*

photograph promote forgiveness and healing? This photograph (or the reconstruction process) omits a more fundamental part, that is, the relationship between perpetrators and victims. In here, following Hicks and Volf, I wonder whether the new identity as the peaceful democratic movement can offer a whole healing to the victims without forgiveness. In my view, there would be no true healing and reconciliation without forgiveness. If so, forgiveness should be considered necessary for the victims' healing. In this respect, I will consider why apology is significant for seeking justice and reconciliation in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 6. RESTORING JUSTICE FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION



Figure 9. On 26 August, 1996, two former presidents of South Korea, Roh Tae-woo (left) and Chun Doo-hwan (right), are waiting for the decision of the Seoul District Court. / 26 August, 1996 © The *Kyunghyang Shinmun*

In the photograph [Fig. 9] two middle-aged men stand together, wearing their prisoners' uniforms. Once called "President" of South Korea, they are now called by their prisoner numbers, "1042" and "3124". No. "1042" on the left side of the picture, with grey hair, is Roh Tae-woo, the 13<sup>th</sup> President of the Republic of Korea. On the right, No. "3124", bald and wearing glasses, is Chun Doo-hwan, the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> President of the Republic of Korea. They seem to be in an official space such as a courtroom. The image has a heavy and serious atmosphere. In this close-up shot focusing on the two men, their faces and gestures, and the official appearance produce a sense of tension—something special is happening.

This photograph was captured at the historical moment when two former



presidents were waiting for the first decision of the Seoul District Court (Room 417) on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1996. Chun Doo-hwan (1931-present) was charged with inciting the 12.12 Coup during the national rebellion. Roh Tae-woo (1933-present) was charged with keeping a slush fund and for his involvement in the 12.12 Coup with Chun Doo-hwan. The court sentenced Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo to death and life imprisonment, respectively.

A day later, this photograph was printed on the front page of major Korean newspapers.<sup>583</sup> The close-up shot of the two men contains several interesting features. First, they are holding hands. This image could be interpreted in different ways. For example, it could be seen to represent their friendship or their complicity in the crime, or both. It also resonates with an earlier photograph: the two of them holding hands when Roh Tae-woo was appointed as the presidential candidate of the Democratic Justice Party on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1987 at the Jamsil Stadium. These two pictures are intentionally placed side by side in the photobook *We Saw: The May 18 Democratic Uprising in Gwangju* published by the May 18 Memorial Foundation.<sup>584</sup>

It is also noticeable that their eyes are gazing in different directions. Presumably, the photographer and editor intentionally captured and highlighted this moment. They appear both separate and together. This could be interpreted as revealing the different thoughts in their minds while their hands are still together. As with the photographs considered earlier, this image is open to many different interpretations. Whereas Chun Doo-hwan appears stubborn or confident as if denying his guilt, Roh Tae-woo looks relatively uneasy or afraid, as if feeling his guilt. It appears as if their “strong” relationship, built upon the strength of their power, is going to be “broken” sooner rather than later.

The so-called “Trial of the Century” has greater significance than the punishment of individual crimes. It is seen as marking the end of the long military dictatorship (1961-1987) and the emergence of Korean democracy. The military

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<sup>583</sup> For example, see Park Rae-yong and Kang Jin-goo, "The Court Sentenced Death to Chun Doo-Hwan," *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* 27 August 1996.

<sup>584</sup> The May 18 Memorial Foundation, *We Saw: The May 18 Democratic Uprising in Gwangju* (Gwangju, South Korea: The May 18 Memorial Foundation, 1991), Pictorial Works. 155-156.

regimes committed numerous crimes and oppressed people by misusing political power and military force.<sup>585</sup> The Gwangju massacre was the symbolic event representing the turbulent history of injustice under the military regimes. At last, 16 years after the Gwangju Uprising had occurred, the main culprits stood before the court to be judged by law. In this respect, this “Trial of the Century” can be seen as a symbolic image of a pivotal moment in Korean history at which justice was sought.

In so doing, the long history of dictatorship seemed to have been concluded. However, a month later, the first court decision was changed. The supreme court reduced and finalized the penalties of each from death to life imprisonment, and from life imprisonment to 17 years in prison. Furthermore, on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1997, Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo were released by presidential pardon. Only two years had passed since they were imprisoned on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December. The trial of the century – a supposed end to military dictatorship and victory for justice – appeared not to last more than two years. This series of events, from the trial to the special pardon, raises fundamental questions about the Korean criminal justice system: what is justice in the current juridical system? Was the court’s decision and the punishment fair? Whom is the justice for? How about the victims?

In dealing with past wrongs, seeking justice became a highly significant task in modern Korean history. The Gwangju Uprising was arguably a successful democratic movement. Although the 10-day protest in May 1980 appeared to fail – it was brutally suppressed by the military regime – it led to the successful June Uprising in 1987 that finally ended the long succession of military regimes. In spite of the many positive aspects of the trial, however, questions can be raised as to whether it was a suitable model for seeking justice. To what extent was the Gwangju Uprising truly successful? To what extent did the end of the uprising result in justice and peace? These questions lead to a more fundamental question: What is justice and the relationship with peace?

Reflecting further on this image of two elderly men in prison fatigues, is it possible to interpret that there is an apology to victims embedded within Chun Doo-hwan’s posture? Unfortunately, no. Chun Doo-hwan has never acknowledged his guilt

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<sup>585</sup> See Chapter 2.

and has never shown proper remorse since being released from prison. It is often recounted that when the government issued him with a fine (about ₩220 billion won), he answered, ‘I have only ₩290,000 won.’ In April 2017 he published his memoir, in which he wrote that he was also a victim of the May 18 incident.

The personal and historical background of this photograph raises the question as to how without acknowledgment and apology, people – particularly victims’ families – can have a sense of justice? What is justice for the victims of the Gwangju Uprising? How far is it possible to achieve a just peace? To what extent is it reconciliation between perpetrators and victims possible through the current justice system? What forms of justice are appropriate for building peace in the aftermath of the Gwangju Uprising? Dealing with a painful past such as the Gwangju Uprising is significant in the way that it leads us into a deeper level of questioning related to Korea’s painful past.

In this final chapter of my thesis, I aim to focus on restorative justice and reconciliation as an alternative approach to building a just *and* peaceful society in the aftermath of a conflict such as the Gwangju Uprising. Because of the relational aspect of reconciliation and restorative justice, I argue, the approach can promote moral imagination that overcomes the limits of the current juridical justice system. Reconciliation can be not only the end of peacebuilding, but also a practical guideline for achieving both peace and justice.

In this chapter, I use a slightly different approach to reading the photograph, compared to the previous chapters. Previously I focused on the different uses of photography as a means of peacebuilding. While, in this chapter, I am interested in using the photograph [Fig. 9] as a catalyst for reflection upon what is just peace following the Gwangju Uprising in a Korean context. I consider that the photograph is an example of the current judicial system dealing with the violent past such as the Gwangju Uprising. The aim of this chapter is, therefore, to invite the audience of the photograph into a discussion on justice and peace in relation to the Gwangju Uprising. Arguably, without a just peace settlement it is hard to imagine a lasting peace.

My argument is threefold: first, the juridical system of South Korea was not sufficient to bring peace and justice together. The photograph of the “Trial of the Century” is an example that represents “justice without reconciliation”, excluding

victims. Secondly, we need an alternative approach to justice that focuses on victims—*restorative justice*. Lastly, proper apology and forgiveness is crucial for the healing of victims and reconciliation. Forgiveness is essential for building peace beyond retribution. Reconciliation in the moral imagination is a key to restoring justice and building a peaceful future. I will start by considering the concept of justice and the debates on justice and peace.

## **6.1 The Complex Relation between Peace and Justice**

### **6.1.1 Justice in Dispute**

Today, justice is in dispute. Searching for the meanings and implications of justice has become a more complex task than ever. Duncan Forrester (1933-2016), a Scottish Christian theologian and influential figure in public theology, has written on the concept of justice in the (post)modern era.<sup>586</sup> In his book *Christian Justice and Public Policy* (1997), Forrester mentions two problems in contemporary theories of justice: the first is that there are ‘fundamental and irreducible incompatibilities between the various accounts of justice’, and the other is that ‘religious and theological factors, insights and narratives are systematically excluded as a matter of principle’ in theories of justice.<sup>587</sup> Forrester understands the fragmentation of justice(s) as a social phenomenon in (post)modern society.<sup>588</sup> Unlike the premodern era when religion legitimized what justice is, the concepts and practices of justice are diverse.

The crisis of justice is also prominent in the area of peacebuilding. Seeking justice is critical in peacebuilding because peace and justice are inseparable. There are different concepts of justice and peace, which are intermingled with one another. Different understandings of justice would impact the form of different practices in

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<sup>586</sup> Duncan B. Forrester (10 November 1933 – 29 November 2016) was a Scottish theologian and the founder of the Center for Theology and Public Issues (CTPI) at New College, University of Edinburgh, UK. The CTPI was established in 1984 and it is the oldest research centre for public theology in the world. Forrester worked on the intersection between theology and politics, focusing on Scotland, UK and Europe. He became later honorary fellow and emeritus professor at New College.

<sup>587</sup> Duncan B. Forrester, *Christian Justice and Public Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). 2.

<sup>588</sup> *Ibid.* 2-3.

peacebuilding—and vice versa. Peace and justice do not always come together; instead, we are often forced to choose which is more important between peace and justice. Moreover, definitions of justice and peace can be differently understood in different socio-political contexts. Different agents such as scholars, practitioners, and politicians can have diverse perspectives on these themes. It becomes more complicated when there is a collective dimension to dealing with past wrongs, such as was the case with the Gwangju Uprising.

To examine the relationship between peace and justice, we need to understand the complexity of the two concepts. We can start simply by asking, “what is peace?”<sup>589</sup> However, the concept of peace is not so easy to define. In peace and conflict studies there are at least three different ways of understanding peace: peace-making, peace-building, and peace-keeping.<sup>590</sup> With each definition, its emphasis and practices vary. For instance, Johan Galtung, one of the founders of contemporary peace studies, provides a useful distinction between ‘negative’ peace and ‘positive’ peace. According to him, *negative* peace means “the cessation of direct violence”, while *positive* peace refers to an expanded concept that includes the dimension of “structural and cultural violence”.<sup>591</sup> Structural and cultural violence can be related to what is (in)justice. From the *positive* peace perspective, diverse social and structural injustices are at the roots of violence and therefore need to be fixed or resolved before a conflict occurs.

As Galtung acknowledged, both concepts of peace are in danger of misuse. *Negative* peace is criticized for there is a possibility of peace being maintained by injustice. We can find historical examples such as Germany ruled by Hitler. Yet, *positive* peace also presents a dilemma. As scholars like Oliver Ramsbotham argue, the concept of injustice is always a perceived form.<sup>592</sup> It can be applied differently by

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<sup>589</sup> David Cortright, *Peace: A History of Movements and Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>590</sup> Generally speaking, peacemaking refers a diplomatic action to negotiate conflicts; peacekeeping describes the deployment of armed forces to intervene as a buffer zone and to enforce a ceasefire agreement; and peacebuilding means a long-term strategy to reduce a chance of conflict.

<sup>591</sup> Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*. 72.

<sup>592</sup> Hugh Miall, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts*, ed. Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2005). 12. (Recited from Sebastian Kim, “Justice and Peace Will Kiss Each Other (Psalm 85.10b): Minjung

stakeholders and even manipulated by outsiders for their own agenda. In the peacebuilding field, there are different understandings of peace and justice which would affect a decision-making process.

### 6.1.2 Peace First, Justice Later

Debates on peace and justice are divided according to which is given priority (Hovil et al. 2005; Whitmore 2010; Philpott 2012; Kim 2015).<sup>593</sup> First, it is argued that peace should be prior to justice. For example, Todd Whitmore at the University of Notre Dame points out that negative peace can be a precondition for justice. Whitmore criticizes Catholic social teaching for its tendency to put justice and human rights above peace.<sup>594</sup>

“Peace first, justice later” cannot be applied to all contexts. This priority is decided by each unique context. In a protracted conflict situation, peacekeeping would be prior to seeking justice because it is more urgent. For example, in the conflict of Northern Uganda (1986-1998), it was not practical to seek justice first. There are various stakeholders who are accountable for justice and in the midst of complexity, it is almost impossible to seek justice first within the context. Reports on Northern Uganda describe the complexity and uncertainty of the context.<sup>595</sup> The Refugee Law Project (2005), for instance, claims the priority of (negative) peace within the situation:

... the war has to end first, and only then can decision be made as to what mechanisms of justice should be implemented ... unless and until the conditions detailed above, wherein people's security cannot be guaranteed, are changed, those people living in the midst of conflict have neither the time nor the inclination to focus on post-conflict

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Perspectives on Peace-Building," *Transformation* 32, no. 3 (2015). 189.)

<sup>593</sup> Forrester, *Christian Justice and Public Policy*. See Introduction and Chapter 1.

<sup>594</sup> Todd D. Whitmore, "Peacebuilding and Its Challenging Partners: Justice, Human Rights, Developments, and Solidarity," in *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis*, ed. Robert J. Schreiter, R. Scott Appleby, and Gerard F. Powers (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2010).

<sup>595</sup> See Lucy Hovil, Joanna R. Quinn, and Project Refugee Law, *Peace First, Justice Later: Traditional Justice in Northern Uganda* (Kampala: Refugee Law Project, 2005); and Adam Branch, "Neither Peace nor Justice: Political Violence and the Peasantry in Northern Uganda, 1986 -1998," *African Studies Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (2005).

reconstruction.<sup>596</sup>

The ‘peace first, justice later’ approach emphasizes negative peace as the minimum condition for those in conflict. In a protracted war, nothing is more important than for people to stop killing each other. Unless fighting ceases, nothing further is possible since security is the priority in this context. Once people stop fighting, however, dialogue and negotiation might be possible. In so doing, people can build trust and step forward toward a peace agreement. Thus, peace should be a practical priority and can be a starting point toward justice and reconciliation.

### **6.1.3 Justice First, Peace Later**

However, as mentioned earlier, ‘peace first, justice later’ can be misused as a tool for prolonging unjust structures and suppression such as a military dictatorship. This is evident in modern Korean history from the Japanese occupation in 1910 until today. Kim Dong-choon, a standing member of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee in Korea (TRCK), holds that there have been two critical moments of political transition in Korea.<sup>597</sup> The first moment is “the postcolonial period” (1945-1950) and the second is “the interim period of political freedom and another failed attempt to achieve justice” (19 April-15 May 1961). From these two moments, dealing with the pro-Japanese issue is the most appropriate example for our discussion.

Since Korea was colonized by Japan from 1910-1945, its political task in the postcolonial period was ‘to establish an independent democratic nation-state.’ During this period, although ‘the US military government prosecuted Japanese war criminals in Tokyo Trials’, Dong-choon argues that ‘it did not adopt a similar policy in South Korea because Korea was not an enemy of the United States but had been a victim of Japanese annexation for almost forty years.’ Kim Dong-choon clearly asserts that justice was the priority for building a new nation:

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<sup>596</sup> Hovil, Quinn, and Refugee Law, *Peace First, Justice Later : Traditional Justice in Northern Uganda*. 17. (Recited from Sebastian Kim, "Justice and Peace Will Kiss Each Other (Psalm 85.10b): Minjung Perspectives on Peace-Building." 189.)

<sup>597</sup> Kim Dong-choon is a sociologist and professor at the Sung-kong-hoe University in Seoul, South Korea. See Kim Dong-choon, "The Long Road toward Truth and Reconciliation."

In order to build a new nation where justice and democracy flourished, dissolving Japan's colonial governing system and prosecuting the collaborators were the priorities.<sup>598</sup>

Bruce Cumings, a professor at the University of Chicago and expert on Korean history, also argues that the 'pro-Japanese issue was perhaps the most important issue in the early postwar period.'<sup>599</sup> In spite of this necessity, the pro-Japanese issue was not successfully dealt with. Since the U.S. military government needed to recruit experienced Korean administrators from the Japanese colonial government, these individuals were excluded from punishment after independence even though many of them had willingly cooperated with Japanese colonial rule. Kim Dong-choon argues that '[t]he U.S. military government employed them in spite of their past and they later secured high-ranking positions in Rhee Syngman's government, the first republic of South Korea.'<sup>600</sup>

In the Cold-War era, anti-communism was another factor that distorted the attempt to seek justice in South Korea. There were calls for the prosecution of Japanese collaborators 'in order to obtain historical justice' which resulted in the enactment of the Special Act on Punishing Anti-National Conducts and the emergence of the Special Investigation Committee (SIC). It was 'the first attempt at historical justice and truth' in South Korea since independence. But it did not last long because the Rhee Syngman government, along with the conservatives, obstructed the Act 'by accusing the SIC of communist-influenced leadership and protesting that the Act might be misused to arrest "patriots" who had fought against the communists'.<sup>601</sup> As a result, the SIC had to cease its task within a year, having produced few results.<sup>602</sup> Kim Dong-choon evaluates the failure of the first attempt at historical justice and truth:

In South Korea, just as in South Vietnam, old colonial elites continued to enjoy their social status thanks to U.S. support, and their power was

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<sup>598</sup> Ibid. 529.

<sup>599</sup> Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War. Vol. 2: The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990). 234.

<sup>600</sup> Kim Dong-choon, "The Long Road toward Truth and Reconciliation."

<sup>601</sup> Ibid. 530.

<sup>602</sup> Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War. Vol. 2: The Roaring of the Cataract, 1947-1950*. 234-236.



entrenched under the cover of anticommunism. [...] the Rhee government failed to represent the people inasmuch as the government was filled and run by individuals who had collaborated with the Japanese in the colonial era. In time, the old elites restored many of the oppressive features of the colonial government in an effort to protect themselves from their own past and from future challenges.<sup>603</sup>

What we should not overlook, and is perhaps more important, is that the failure to seek justice brought further injustice to South Korea. Kim Dong-choon argues that the pro-Japanese group succeeded ‘not only in surviving the end of the colonialism but also in becoming the new masters of postcolonial Korea’.

They hid their past, and in so doing committed more injustices. As their power grew, so did their need to suppress their past. Lies bred more lies, state violence grew more violent. The Republic of Korea, which started on the back of colonial injustices, piled on other human right violations from its beginning.<sup>604</sup>

From this perspective, failure to seek justice (*kwakosa-chongsan*, which means “cleaning the past of wrongdoings”) not only sustains the structure of injustice but causes new forms of injustice. In the Korean context, the early failures (1945-1950) became a fundamental background for the entrance of the military regimes (1961-1987).<sup>605</sup>

The military regimes started with the coup in 1961 led by General Park Chung-hee, who graduated from a Japanese military academy in Manchuria. Park Chung-hee created a new intelligence organization, the Korean National Intelligence Agency (KCIA), and gave it almost unlimited judicial power to police antigovernment activists. From that time, as Kim Dong-choon argues, new types of injustice occurred such as human rights abuses in the form of torture, fabricated espionage charges, and suspicious deaths.<sup>606</sup>

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<sup>603</sup> Kim Dong-choon, "The Long Road toward Truth and Reconciliation." 530-531.

<sup>604</sup> Ibid. 533.

<sup>605</sup> Ibid. 533-536. The military regimes (1961-1987) includes the Park Chung-hee regimes (1961-1979) and the Chun Doo-hwan regimes (1979-1987), and it was ended by the June Democratic Uprising in 1987.

<sup>606</sup> Ibid. 535.

The Gwangju massacre was inseparable from the emergence of the military regimes. After Park Chung-hee's assassination in December 1979, General Chun Doo-hwan seized power through the 12.12 coup which resulted in calls for democracy and human rights accelerating. In order to secure nation-wide control, the Chun Doo-hwan regime chose to accuse and arrest political opponents such as Kim Dae-jung, who later became president of South Korea. 'Political repression and outright killings, such as in Gwangju, effectively silenced political dissidents.'<sup>607</sup> It would be no exaggeration to argue that the tragedy in Gwangju occurred on account of previous failure to seek justice.

Thus far, we have discussed two perspectives on the relationship between peace and justice. While both peace and justice are important, we are often forced to prioritize either peace or justice. Since there is no absolute justice, justice for one group can be misused for sectarianism and partisanship. By contrast, a naïve approach to peace can be 'misused for maintaining security, the status quo, stability which are priorities for those in power.'<sup>608</sup> Both positions are reasonable as are their critiques. The decision as to whether to prioritize peace or justice should therefore be contextual.

At least in the Korean context, the priority of justice is more persuasive. As discussed earlier, Korean society lost several critical chances to pursue justice, which resulted in further injustices. Korean theologian Sebastian Kim also argues that 'seeking justice has to have priority' and 'one has to be very cautious about too easily accepting a peace option at the expense of justice'.<sup>609</sup> I agree that seeking justice should be our priority particularly within the Korean context. Let us now look to the Korean churches in relation to the debate on peace and justice. How did the Korean churches respond to this challenging question? In what follows, I will discuss Korean theologians' positions on the demands of justice in Korea, focusing on *minjung* theology.

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<sup>607</sup> Ibid. 537.

<sup>608</sup> Sebastian Kim, "Justice and Peace Will Kiss Each Other (Psalm 85.10b): Minjung Perspectives on Peace-Building." 190.

<sup>609</sup> Ibid.

## 6.2 *Minjung Theology as Korean Voices that Seek Justice First*

Sebastian Kim has developed the debates on justice and peace from a Korean perspective, focusing on *minjung* theology and *minjung* arts. Kim regards *minjung* theology and its practices as a model of “justice first, peace later” in the Korean context. He briefly outlines historical contributions of *minjung* theology during the military regimes and shows how *minjung* arts helped the liberation of the poor and the marginalized. He maintains that ‘the fight for justice for the poor and oppressed is what has brought a sustainable peace in South Korea’.<sup>610</sup>

### 6.2.1 Contributions of *Minjung* Theology in Korean history

During the military regimes (1961-1987), the key political agenda was democratization, which could only happen by ending the dictatorship. The popular slogan of the protesters “*dokjae-tado*” (ending dictatorship) represents their notion of justice as the end of dictatorship because numerous injustices and human rights abuses were carried out by the military regimes. Within this context, the term democratization was another name for justice. It seems that there was no space for peace without achieving justice and democratization.

It is argued that justice is a foundation for peace. Pauline H. Baker, president emeritus of the Fund for Peace, has argued for the importance of seeking justice in peacebuilding. Baker refers to those who work for peacebuilding as “conflict managers” and those who work for democracy and human rights as “democratizers”. She argues that ‘peace is no longer acceptable on any terms; it is intimately linked with the notion of justice.’<sup>611</sup> She understands conflict management as a “short-term solution” and suggests there is a need for a ‘solid democratic foundation’ that would provide ‘a better chance of sustainable security and peace’.<sup>612</sup>

The case of the Gwangju Uprising was not exceptional. Diverse groups requested the end of dictatorship and fought for the democratization of Korea. Korean

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<sup>610</sup> Ibid. 188.

<sup>611</sup> Pauline H. Baker, *Conflict Resolution Versus Democratic Governance: Divergent Paths to Peace?* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996). 566.

<sup>612</sup> Ibid. (Recited from Sebastian Kim, "Justice and Peace Will Kiss Each Other (Psalm 85.10b): Minjung Perspectives on Peace-Building." 189).

churches were among these groups, although not all churches, since Christian participation in the democratization movement was controversial. It served as a turning point that Korean churches were theologically and politically divided into conservative and liberal positions. Sebastian Kim asserts, ‘While conservative Christians focused their attention on church growth and spiritual renewal, growing numbers of Christians, led by *minjung* theologians, stood against the injustice brought by the capitalist market system and military-backed governments’.<sup>613</sup>

“*Minjung*” is the Sino-Korean term for the masses or the people. Suh Nam-dong, a prominent *minjung* theologian, presented his article “Toward a Theology of *Han*” in 1975.<sup>614</sup> Suh identifies Jesus with the poor, sick, and oppressed and insists that the gospel of Jesus is the gospel of salvation and liberation. For him, ‘it is manifested in the struggle with those evil powers; liberation is not individual or spiritual but rather communal and political’.<sup>615</sup> Suh Nam-dong develops *minjung* theology based on the Korean background, by seeing the *minjung* as “subjects of history” and dealing with *han* (suffering) as the key theme for Korean theology.<sup>616</sup>

*Minjung* theology was born in an *unjust* social context and its major concerns were divided between three issues: first, poverty and injustice among factory workers and farmers, second, political oppression and human rights abuse by the military regimes, and, finally, peaceful unification of the two Koreas.<sup>617</sup> As an example, the *minjung* movement exploded when Jeon Tae-il killed himself as a means of protesting against the exploitation of fellow factory workers. Jeon Tae-il was a Sunday school teacher at a Methodist church in Seoul and instigated labour rights campaigns while

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<sup>613</sup> Sebastian Kim, "Justice and Peace Will Kiss Each Other (Psalm 85.10b): Minjung Perspectives on Peace-Building." 190.

<sup>614</sup> Suh Nam-dong, "Toward a Theology of Han," in *Minjung Theology: Peace as the Subjects of History*, ed. Kim Yong-bock (Maryknoll: NY: Orbis Books, 1983). 51-65.

<sup>615</sup> Sebastian Kim, "Socio-Political Reconciliation: Struggles against Injustice and Division in Korea," in *Theology in the Public Sphere*, ed. Sebastian Kim (London: SCM Press, 2011). 117.

<sup>616</sup> Ibid.

<sup>617</sup> Sebastian Kim, "Justice and Peace Will Kiss Each Other (Psalm 85.10b): Minjung Perspectives on Peace-Building."

working at a garment factory. The incident significantly impacted Christian groups and affected the formation of *minjung* theology.<sup>618</sup>

Another example is the 1973 Korean Christian Manifesto, which declared the unrighteousness of the *Yushin* constitution (translated as “New Constitution”) enforced by the Park Chung-hee’s government. This Christian group understood the *Yushin* constitution as a regression to the Japanese colonial era. The Manifesto declares that ‘no one is above law’ and ‘Christians are called to be involved in proclaiming truth and justice and fighting for the poor, marginalized and oppressed.’<sup>619</sup> The declaration made three calls for action: ‘for rejection of the Yushin constitution and unity for democratization, for renewal of the church for the poor and oppressed, and for garnering support from the world church.’<sup>620</sup>

Lastly, the contribution of *minjung* theologians to the peace and justice of Korea is their emphasis on the peaceful reunification of the two Koreas. In February 1988, the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK) issued the ‘Declaration of Korean Churches for National Unification of the Korean People and Peace in the Korean Peninsula’, which contributed not only to the Korean churches, but to the whole society.<sup>621</sup> Sebastian Kim states the significance of the declaration:

The declaration, while affirming the three principles expressed in the Joint Declaration of 1972 [between the North and South] – self-determination, peace, and grassroots unification of the Koreas – added the priority of humanitarian practice and the participation of the *minjung*, who are the victims of the divided Korea, in the unification discussions.<sup>622</sup>

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<sup>618</sup> Ibid. 191

<sup>619</sup> Ibid.

<sup>620</sup> Rhie Deak-Joo and Cho Yee-Jei, *Creeds and Confessions of Korean Church* (Seoul, Korea: Han Deul Pub. House, 1997). 271-276. See also Yoo Dong-sik, *The Mineral Vein of Korean Theology* (Seoul: Dasan Geulbang, 2000). 258-259. (Recited from Sebastian Kim, "Justice and Peace Will Kiss Each Other (Psalm 85.10b): Minjung Perspectives on Peace-Building.")

<sup>621</sup> Yi Man-yol, *Korean Christianity and National Unification Movement: Research into Korean Christian History* (Seoul: Institute of the History of Christianity in Korea, 2001). 389-414.

<sup>622</sup> Sebastian Kim, "Justice and Peace Will Kiss Each Other (Psalm 85.10b): Minjung Perspectives on Peace-Building." 192.

What is noticeable is the emphasis on the priority of humanitarian practice and the new perspective of *minjung* as the victims of the division. It reflects the priority of justice in the discussion of unification which was emphasized by *minjung* theologians. The declaration was later proclaimed as the Year of National Jubilee for Churches in North and South Korea in 1995. Moreover, the statement, along with five principles, was reaffirmed at the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 2013 in Busan, South Korea.<sup>623</sup>

It was controversial that Moon Ik-hwan, Protestant minister and activist, visited North Korea to meet Kim Il-sung in 1989—he was arrested as he returned to Seoul. What motivated Moon Ik-hwan to accept the risk of crossing the border? He believed that peace (reunification) and justice (democratization) are inseparable. While ‘North Korea should work for the freedom and human rights of its people’, he argued, ‘the South also needed to work towards more equality and just distribution of wealth’. Thus, he asserts that ‘one cannot talk about unification and peace in the Korean peninsula without dealing with democratization and justice since they are integrated.’<sup>624</sup>

This is important because the priority of justice among *minjung* theologians affected the theology of peace and unification in Korea. For example, Ahn Byung-mu, one of the most influential *minjung* theologians, has argued that it is impossible to achieve peace without justice. Living under the military regime, Ahn came to believe that true peace will not come about in Korea until justice is achieved. For him, justice refers to the liberation of the *minjung* from exploitation, the restoration of human rights, and the democratization of Korea.<sup>625</sup> He claims that ‘justice and peace should be

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<sup>623</sup> The five principles are 1) self-reliant unification, 2) peaceful unification, 3) national unity through trust and cooperation, 4) democratic unification by people’s participation, and 5) North-South relations based on a humanitarian approach. See <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/2013-busan/adopted-documents-statements/peace-and-reunification-of-the-korean-peninsula> (Accessed 30 May 2017).

<sup>624</sup> Moon Ik-hwan, *How Can Unification Be Achieved?* (Seoul: Hakminsa, 1984). pp. 36-44. (Recited from Sebastian Kim, "Justice and Peace Will Kiss Each Other (Psalm 85.10b): Minjung Perspectives on Peace-Building." 192-193.)

<sup>625</sup> Ahn Byung-mu, *Christ in the Midst of Minjung Event* (Seoul: Korea Theological Study Institute, 1989). 34-59.

understood from a *minjung* perspective which is learnt through understanding the historical Jesus who was on the side of the poor and oppressed.<sup>626</sup>

### 6.2.2 Limits of *Minjung* Theology

Although *minjung* theology has made important contributions to seeking justice under the military regimes, it can be criticized for several reasons. First, it can be misunderstood as a pro-communist position particularly because of the nuance of the term *minjung*. “Minjung” is a Chinese-based word (民衆) for “ordinary mass people” and it resonates with the term “inmin” (人民) used in North Korea. Second, there is confusion about the identity of the *minjung*. The *minjung* in the first generation (1970s) was identified with the poor and oppressed under the military government, but this became less clear after the second generation (1980s). Since *minjung* theology is embedded in a social context, the notion of justice can be blurred.<sup>627</sup>

Lastly, *minjung* theologians identified themselves with *minjung*, by living with them and participating in their suffering just as Jesus did. However, who can give the authority and how can it be testified to? Sebastian Kim explains that the key identity of *minjung* theologians was their authentic and incarnated lives with the poor and oppressed:

... Minjung theologians *did* identify themselves with minjung by participating in suffering with them. Many theologians went to prison and went through hardship. Because they identified with Jesus and the minjung in their theology, they suffered with the minjung and so the minjung theologians, at least the first generation in the 1970s, *became* minjung. Though they may not have come from a minjung background – in fact, most of them were intellectuals – they qualified as minjung theologians in that they shared their experience of the poor. The leaders of the minjung church deliberately put themselves in a vulnerable situation and participated in the poverty and suffering of minjung, their theology was the outcome of their struggle against what they saw as an evil system. Therefore minjung theology has a legitimate place in the life of Korean people as *of* the minjung and thus gives self-identity to

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<sup>626</sup> Sebastian Kim, "Justice and Peace Will Kiss Each Other (Psalm 85.10b): Minjung Perspectives on Peace-Building." p. 193.

<sup>627</sup> Sebastian Kim, "Socio-Political Reconciliation: Struggles against Injustice and Division in Korea." 119-121.

the minjung.<sup>628</sup>

The self-identity is only claimed by themselves. It is a subjective argument from one group and can be objected to by another group or *minjung*. In fact, this issue of identity is one that has been raised by the second generation in the 1980s until today.<sup>629</sup> Hence, it would be fair to argue that *minjung* theology holds a danger of being misunderstood as if *minjung* theologians are “the minjung” and they alone stand for *minjung*.

There is another problem, that is, separatism. Who is “the other” in relation to *minjung*? Are the others, if they are not involved in *minjung*, all evil powers? This is the dilemma of *minjung* theologians. In my view, *minjung* theology and its emphasis on justice is useful for bringing about a structural and legal change as it has a clear framework of “minjung” vs. “opponent”. As the perception of opponent, whether individuals or social structures, is clear, its goal becomes specific and easy to attain. In the case of the Gwangju Uprising, *minjung* theologians’ perception of justice was specific: the legal punishment of those involved, including Chun Doo-hwan, and the acknowledgment of the Gwangju Uprising as a democratic movement. However, it was not sufficient to bring about a more fundamental change.

Thus far, we have looked at the debates on peace and justice based on priority of them. I have argued that the “peace first, justice later” approach can be misused to maintain unjust systems. I have also argued that the priority of justice is more persuasive in the Korean context, giving the example of how *minjung* theology played a pivotal role in ending the dictatorship and bringing about the new era of democracy. However, *minjung* theology and its seeking justice first can be misused as another form of separatism.

On the one hand, efforts to seek justice during the uprising produced successful results: the two former presidents were punished by law and the Gwangju Uprising was officially established as a national memorial day. Nevertheless, the roots of the conflict have remained in our society. The Gwangju Uprising often appears on the news media, mainly dealing with a series of attempts to distort truth and to degrade

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<sup>628</sup> Ibid. 119-120.

<sup>629</sup> Ibid.



its value.<sup>630</sup> It can be argued that the uprising is politicized to incite regionalism to attain political support. The dichotomous separation between the “*honam*” (Southwestern region) as progressive, and the “*youngnam*” (Southeastern region) as conservative, should be overcome.<sup>631</sup> In this context, the suffering group are still the victims and their voices and demands seem easily ignored.

The dualistic perspective is powerful when the opponent is clearly evil, but it can be too simplistic in real situations of conflict. In that way, *minjung* theology and its priority of justice can be another cause of conflict. We need to ask if there is a third way to overcome the tension between peace and justice. Should we choose either peace or justice as a priority, or is it more important to find a balance between peace and justice? Perhaps it would be wiser to put our efforts towards holding both peace and justice together, instead of sacrificing one.

Let us return to the photograph of the “Trial of the Century” [Fig. 9]. The picture was often regarded as a symbol that justice was accomplished because “they” (evil doers) were punished. However, what the photograph represents is “justice as punishment”. Then, we can ask: Where is peace and reconciliation in the photograph? Can we see that justice is fully accomplished? Although the photograph depicts neither peace nor reconciliation, I argue that it can arouse the viewers’ moral imagination, helping them to reflect on the meaning of justice in this situation. In other words, the photograph helps the audience reimagine what justice means in this context and how justice should be accomplished for building peace and reconciliation.

### **6.2.3 Will Justice and Peace Kiss Each Other?**

In my view, justice and peace are inseparable. Christianity does not teach whether justice or peace should be first. Rather, seeking justice is the way toward peace. It should be understood as a process like a journey for salvation from a long-term perspective. The messianic vision of the psalmist, ‘justice and peace will kiss each other’ (Psalm 85), echoes the holistic vision between justice and peace as the integral

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<sup>630</sup> See Chapter 2 on “Revealing Truth” of this thesis.

<sup>631</sup> See Kim Dong-choon, “The Long Road toward Truth and Reconciliation.”

relationship between them. *Shalom*, the vision of a peaceable kingdom, therefore, shows the ultimate end that God will achieve in his time (Wolterstorff 1983, Cortright 2008).<sup>632</sup> In the Kingdom, there is fullness of peace and justice in harmony, not excluding or isolating any such as “good and bad”, “us and them”, and “victims and perpetrators”.<sup>633</sup>

It is noteworthy that an American philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff also proposes *shalom* as a Christian vision for seeking justice in our society. In his book *Until Justice Embraces Peace* (1983), Wolterstorff examines the church’s social responsibility for seeking justice with three major interests in poverty, nationalism, and urban problems. Drawing upon his Reformed tradition, he highlights the “world-formative” feature as the basis of Christianity for social engagement rather than separation.<sup>634</sup>

He views *liberation theology* and *neo-Calvinism* as two distinct models of the “world-formative” Christianity. Briefly speaking, liberation theologians such as in Lima have fought for the oppressed because they believe salvation as liberation from oppression; while neo-Calvinists in Amsterdam have worked for the “*sovereignty of the spheres*” through practices of differentiation, stewardship, and disclosure.<sup>635</sup> He compares and argues that both express ‘a significant concern for the victims of modern society’ (although the definitions of victims are different) and find ‘the culprit in the structure of modern society and the dynamics underlying that structure rather than in acts of individual waywardness’.<sup>636</sup>

Wolterstorff summarizes two movements with two concepts as freedom of mastery and freedom of self-determination. He concludes that although both have many advantages in seeking justice, both have limitations:

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<sup>632</sup> Cortright, *Peace: A History of Movements and Ideas*.; and Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace : The Kuyper Lectures for 1981 Delivered at the Free University of Amsterdam* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1983).

<sup>633</sup> Cortright, *Peace: A History of Movements and Ideas*. 188.

<sup>634</sup> Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace: The Kuyper Lectures for 1981 Delivered at the Free University of Amsterdam*. See Chapter 1 on “World-Formative Christianity”.

<sup>635</sup> Ibid. See Chapter 3 on “Lima or Amsterdam: Liberation or Disclosure?”.

<sup>636</sup> Ibid. 65.

... liberation theology, with its emphasis on salvation, affirms the importance of freedom of self-determination, but never succeeds in incorporating into its vision, in any satisfactory way, freedom by mastery. The Amsterdam school, with its emphasis on creation, affirms the importance of freedom by mastery, but never succeeds in incorporating into its vision, in any satisfactory way, freedom of self-determination. To guide our thoughts, we need some vision yet more comprehensive than either of these.<sup>637</sup>

He maintains the necessity of a holistic vision for Christianity to build the house of peace and justice together. Hence, he proposes the vision of *shalom* in the Bible as the holistic vision for justice and peace:

We shall see that shalom is intertwined with justice. In shalom, each person enjoys justice, enjoys his or her rights. There is no shalom without justice. But shalom goes beyond justice.<sup>638</sup>

Wolterstorff clarifies that ‘the peace which is shalom is not merely the absence of hostility, not merely being in right relationship’. But rather, shalom at its highest is ‘*enjoyment* in one’s relationships’.<sup>639</sup> It refers to the complete restoration and reconciliation of every relationships (spheres): the first is between God and human, the second between people, and the last human and nature.<sup>640</sup>

We see that Wolterstorff’s perspective on peace is *positive peace* rather than *negative peace*. He does not argue either peace or justice is first; but peace and justice should go together. His argument is useful for reviewing *minjung* theology as well because *minjung* theology can be understood as a similar approach with liberation theology. Despite their significant contributions to justice, minjung theologians’ vision of justice is not satisfactory of peace—restoration and reconciliation. This is because, I argue, the concept of justice among minjung theologians were limited in the criminal justice system. They should aim to go beyond the justice. Then, how is that possible? My contribution to the debates on justice and peace would be this: the vision of shalom can be possible when we focus on restoration and reconciliation of relationships.

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<sup>637</sup> Ibid. 69.

<sup>638</sup> Ibid.

<sup>639</sup> Ibid.

<sup>640</sup> Ibid. 69-71.

The perspective of ‘justice first, peace later’ tends to understand conflict as negative, evil, or something to be eliminated. However, conflict transformation scholars like John Paul Lederach (2003) and Howard Zehr (2002) try to see conflict positively as an energy of social change.<sup>641</sup> They understand conflict not as a problem to be fixed, but a status to be restored. This is related to their emphasis on the relational aspect of conflict. Therefore, what justice is for the conflict transformation scholars and practitioners, is connected to how broken relationships in conflict can be restored or reconciled. In this fashion, reconciliation is the key to holding justice and peace together. In the next section, I will consider the concept of reconciliation and restorative justice as an alternative approach to peacebuilding.

### **6.3 Peacebuilding through Reconciliation and Restorative Justice**

The research on reconciliation and restorative justice is rapidly growing in peace studies (Helmick & Petersen 2001; de Gruchy 2002; Zehr 2002, 2005; Philpott 2012; Llewellyn & Philpott 2014).<sup>642</sup> This growth is related to the positive evaluation of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee in South Africa (1996-1998). The South African TRC showed the world that reconciliation and restorative justice through peacebuilding was possible.

I propose reconciliation and restorative justice as an alternative way to overcome the dualistic gap between peace and justice and to build a just and peaceful society. Since the notion of peace and justice is a relational concept, reconciliation and restorative justice can be complementary to the current justice system, without sacrificing either peace or justice.

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<sup>641</sup> Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*; and Howard Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2002).

<sup>642</sup> See Raymond Helmick S.J. and Rodney L. Petersen, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy & Conflict Transformation* (Philadelphia; London: Templeton Foundation Press, 2002); John W. De Gruchy, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice* (London: SCM Press, 2002); Howard Zehr, *Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1990); Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*; Daniel Philpott, *Just and Unjust Peace: An Ethic of Political Reconciliation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); and also Jennifer J. Llewellyn and Daniel Philpott, *Restorative Justice, Reconciliation, and Peacebuilding* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

### 6.3.1 Justice as Relational

Justice is relational. The concept of *justice as relational* is a fundamental principle of peacebuilding since it helps us to understand the root(s) of conflict and violence. As conflict happens in relationship, so does peace or justice or both. The concept of relational justice focuses on people rather than law or systems, because people are at the core of the complexity of conflict. Thus, relational justice is a people-centered approach. It leads us to fundamental questions: who are the victims; what sorts of pains do they have; why did it happen; and how can it be restored?

Because of the relational aspect, Jennifer Llewellyn and Daniel Philpott (2014) focus on reconciliation and restorative justice as an alternative form of justice. Llewellyn and Philpott assert that reconciliation and restorative justice are “twin frameworks for peacebuilding”, which ‘serve to integrate the various and often competing goals involved in peacebuilding into a holistic framework for normative assessment and practical guidance’.<sup>643</sup>

The concept of justice as *relational* contributes to individualistic approaches to justice. Llewellyn and Philpott point out that the underlying perceptions of peace and justice within the international community such as the UN, western diplomats, and human rights community are based on liberal individualism.<sup>644</sup> Llewellyn and Philpott argue

These ideas [individualistic approach] find expression in the focus of identifying individual offenders to blame and isolate through punishment and on seeking protection through separation from others; in the logic of corrective justice and its reliance on material transfers from wrongdoer to victim in order to return the victim (as close as possible) to her position before the wrong; in the use of rights as shields or swords protecting individuals from the interference of others; and in the strong bifurcation of personal and public reconciliation. These ideas have shaped processes and institutions of peace as well. [...] The result is a thin, legalistic notion of positive peace.’ (16-17)

By contrast, reconciliation and restorative justice emerge from a relational perspective of justice, that is, people-centered and focused on the community they inhabit. Justice

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<sup>643</sup> Llewellyn and Philpott, *Restorative Justice, Reconciliation, and Peacebuilding*. 14.

<sup>644</sup> Ibid. 16.

as *relational* thus seeks right relationships for human flourishing. They stress interdependence in building justice and peace:

On a relational understanding, we are not independent from one another and our autonomy and freedom is not found in separation from one another. We are instead interdependent and our freedom relies on mutual construction and the support of others. Wrong is understood in relational terms as well—as that which results in harm to individuals and the relationships in and through which they live. Understanding and addressing wrongs (the work of justice), then, requires attention to these relationships and how they might be restored.<sup>645</sup>

In this way, reconciliation and restorative justice offer ‘a distinct starting point for framing justice and peace and their relationship.’<sup>646</sup>

Justice as *relational* focuses on the harmful effects of wrongdoings between perpetrators and victims at every level such as individual, group, community, national, and international. As Llewellyn and Philpott argue:

The focus of justice so conceived is on what is required to address these harms in order to establish and maintain peaceful (read variously as: restored, reconciled, or right) relationships, thus ensuring that the conditions for wrongdoing are not replicated. In both accounts, then, the aspiration or goal of justice is the creation and protection of restored or reconciled relationships in the present and future.<sup>647</sup>

In a legalistic concept of justice, justice is achieved by punishment at the boundary of the letter of the law. Yet, in the boundary there is no space for victims. If justice is considered to be *restored* or *reconciled* relationship, justice cannot be achieved without victims. In the notion of relational justice, therefore, a victim(s) becomes an active agent, participating in the process of seeking justice. Their voices, thoughts, and suffering should be more carefully listened to. In the South African TRC, hearing is one of the major parts of the process. At least in the South African context, victims’ participation in the TRC in truth-telling and healing memories, for example, played a pivotal role.<sup>648</sup>

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<sup>645</sup> Ibid. 17.

<sup>646</sup> Ibid.

<sup>647</sup> Ibid. 16.

<sup>648</sup> Forrester, *Christian Justice and Public Policy*. 4-6.

### 6.3.2 Punishment is Not Justice

Secondly, punishment is not justice. From the perspective of *justice as relational*, justice focuses on people, particularly victims, and their healing. However, the legal punishment of the two presidents cannot guarantee victims' healing. Furthermore, victims are not involved in the current criminal system, except as witnesses. I argue that the aim of justice is not merely punishment but healing and restoration, with a particular focus on victims.

We need to change our perspective on the concept of justice and the criminal justice system. In his book *Changing Lenses: A New Focus on Crime and Justice* (1990), Howard Zehr, a Mennonite theologian and prominent scholar in the field, maintains that the U.S. criminal justice system fails to rehabilitate offenders by concerning itself with punishment.<sup>649</sup> He argues that victims should 'be at the centre of the justice process with their needs as the major focus'.<sup>650</sup> However, in the criminal justice system, justice is defined as 'applying the law' and crime as 'lawbreaking'. He asserts that 'crime is defined as an offense against the state. The state, not the individual, is defined as victim. The state—and only the state—may respond.'<sup>651</sup> In the system in which the state is defined as victim, victims are always left out of the process. There can be structural improvement for victims such as compensation and assistance programs, but without a paradigm shift on the concepts of justice and crime, he argues, victims would remain excluded.<sup>652</sup> I think that Zehr's argument can be applied to the Korean context, although with differences.

The trial of the century, as we saw in the picture [Fig. 9] was the result of the long fight against the military regimes; however, the trial was mainly led by the legal process. The court had the authority to decide whether two former presidents, Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo, were guilty or not. I wonder, were they guilty only because they were sentenced as guilty by the judge? What if not? Because they were punished, has justice been achieved? Was the punishment enough to compensate the

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<sup>649</sup> Zehr, *Changing Lenses : A New Focus for Crime and Justice*.

<sup>650</sup> Ibid. 30.

<sup>651</sup> Ibid. 81.

<sup>652</sup> Ibid. 82.

victims' losses and sufferings? Is it possible to heal the victims' suffering by punishing someone? Then, how severely should we punish them?

From a Christian perspective, punishment itself can be neither justice nor a means of salvation. Christopher D. Marshall (2001) carefully examines the concept of punishment and Christ's salvation in the New Testament. Marshall clarifies that the end of God's justice is not retribution but restoration. As Marshall argues Christ died for solidarity with humanity, not for legal imputation:

Christ suffers the penalty of sin not because God transfers our punishment onto him as substitute victim but because Christ fully and freely identifies himself with the plight and destiny of sinful humanity under the reign of death and pays the price for doing so. The thought is not one of legal imputation of guilt to Christ but of Christ's solidarity with humanity in its shameful and culpable situation. Christ takes our guilt in the sense that, as our "representative substitute," he accepts the deadly consequences of our guilt ...<sup>653</sup>

Marshall also corrects our misunderstanding of the use of the terms 'sacrificial' or 'sacrifice' in relation to Christ's death:

... It is also true that Paul depicts Christ's death in sacrificial terms. But it is simplistic and misleading to equate sacrifice with punishment. In ancient Israel, sacrifices were made for a variety of purposes – to seal covenants, to offer thanksgiving, to remember past deeds of salvation, to commune with God, to respond to God's goodness, to express shame and regret, and to deal with sin. Paul interprets Christ's death as a covenant sacrifice (1 Cor. 15:20, 23), a sacrifice of self-obligation (Rom 8:32; Gal. 2:20), and a sin offering (Rom. 3:25; 4:25; 8:3; 1 Cor. 15:3, 20, 23; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 1:4). None of these entail retributive punishment.<sup>654</sup>

'Even in the depiction of Christ's death as a sin offering', Marshall continues to argue, 'the fundamental thought is not one of punishment but one of expiation'. He quotes John Goldingay,

Sacrifice does not involve penal substitution in the sense that one entity bears another's punishment. By laying hands on the offering, the offerers identify with it and pass on to it not their guilt but their stain. The

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<sup>653</sup> Christopher D. Marshall, *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime, and Punishment* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2001). 62.

<sup>654</sup> Ibid. 63.



offering is then not vicariously punished but vicariously cleansed.<sup>655</sup>

Marshall and Goldingay stress that God's justice in the Bible is not punitive but restorative. It sheds light on the discussion of what justice is, highlighting the distinction between retributive and restorative justice. From a retributive justice perspective, 'Crime is a violation of the state, defined by lawbreaking and guilt. Justice determines blame and administers pain in a contest between the offender and the state directed by systematic rules.' From a restorative justice perspective, by contrast, 'Crime is a violation of people and relationships. It creates obligations to make things right. Justice involves the victim, the offender, and the community in a search for solutions which promote repair, reconciliation, and reassurance.'<sup>656</sup>

It is noteworthy that Zehr understands crime as *a violation to people and relationships*. In doing so, restorative justice pursues constructive outcomes such as restoration from harm, healing from pain, and reconciliation between perpetrators and victims. The idea of restored or reconciled relationship as justice is further developed to a wrongdoer. The "right relationship" includes not only victims but wrongdoers. The idea of right relationship can be seen as reconciliation. In the next, I will consider how reconciliation fits into justice in the political realm.

### 6.3.3 Reconciliation as Political Justice

Justice is not only relational but also restorative. Finally, justice seeks reconciliation—building a right relationship. We have already looked at debates on justice and peace, and their relationship. In his book *Just and Unjust Peace: An Ethic of Political Reconciliation* (2012), Daniel Philpott, in a similar but more sophisticated fashion, classifies seven relationships between reconciliation and justice. The seven perspectives are as follows: 1) reconciliation sacrifices justice; 2) reconciliation is unjustly paternalistic; 3) reconciliation is a second-best alternative to justice; 4) reconciliation complements justice; 5) reconciliation equals the justice of positive

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<sup>655</sup> John Goldingay, "Old Testament Sacrifice and the Death of Christ," in *Atonement Today*, ed. John Goldingay (London: SPCK, 1995). 10. (Recited from Marshall, *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime, and Punishment*. 64).

<sup>656</sup> Zehr, *Changing Lenses : A New Focus for Crime and Justice*. 181.

peace; 6) reconciliation encompasses justice; and 7) reconciliation equals justice that entails a comprehensive restoration of relationship.<sup>657</sup>

The first two perspectives are negative towards the concept of reconciliation in seeking justice. The other five perspectives are positive but the nuances of their understandings and applications are different. As well as restorative justice, Philpott also takes the same stance—justice as building right relationship. Moreover, he argues that this view of justice is commonly found within the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions.<sup>658</sup>

For Philpott, the aim of justice is to restore ‘not an abstract balance of right and wrong, overall utility, political stability, or rights alone but rather the actual wounded persons and ruptured relationships.’

... justice is the will to bring a comprehensive repair to the relationships that injustices have ruptured so that the persons involved are once again living according to the demands of right relationship. What is most important about this concept of justice is that it performs this repair with respect to the wide range of wounds that injustices inflict on persons and relationships.

Based on restorative justice, Philpott understands reconciliation as identical to justice as a goal and a process of restoring right relationship. He further develops the concept of reconciliation as political justice. He argues that politics in (individualistic) liberalism is limited in its focus on human rights and democracy, then maintains that reconciliation can be an ethical standard for political justice. He criticizes the limits of political justice in liberalism:

Governments might always stop short of restoring comprehensive justice if they are to remain limited governments, one of the core characteristics of regimes based on human rights and democracy. These limits on the reach of government are what make the present ethic one of political reconciliation. Right conduct in the political realm is little different from the positive peace of liberalism. It is in redressing unjust conduct—the other dimension of justice—that political reconciliation becomes far more distinctive.<sup>659</sup>

In contemporary liberalism, political justice is often limited by its individualistic and

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<sup>657</sup> Philpott, *Just and Unjust Peace : An Ethic of Political Reconciliation*. 49-53.

<sup>658</sup> Ibid. 53. The reason he considers three religions is related to the purpose of the book to pursue a common census on what justice is in the pluralistic society.

<sup>659</sup> Ibid.

legal concept of peace, in line with human rights and democracy. As found in the case of the Gwangju Uprising, what was seen as the victory of justice was limited in the way in which it failed to restore right relationship between perpetrators and victims. Observing the image of the “Trial of the Century” [Fig. 9], we need to ask whether the image can be a symbol of justice. I would argue that it was limited justice. In the image of the trial, we can find symbols of positive peace in liberalism such as punishment, human rights, and democracy. What is missing, however, are victims and sincere apology, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

What is justice in the context of the Gwangju Uprising? Reconciliation as political justice would offer an answer. Philpott argues that reconciliation as political justice enables the limits of the liberal concept of justice to be overcome. As he argues, justice ‘involves not merely restoring rights but also redressing the wide set of wounds that political injustices have inflicted on persons and relationships’.<sup>660</sup> What then would one need to do to promote reconciliation? Lastly, I will consider the importance of apology for reconciliation.

#### **6.3.4 The Importance of an Apology**

One of the values of restorative justice and reconciliation is that it offers a theoretical basis that emphasizes an apology. Philpott suggests six practices for promoting reconciliation as political justice: building socially just institutions, acknowledgement, reparations, apologies, punishment, and forgiveness.<sup>661</sup> Among these practices, I will focus on apology here, which is less emphasized in peacebuilding. It can be argued that apology is not mandatory, because one cannot be forced to apologize. Some would argue that justice and peace can be achieved without sincere apology and forgiveness.

However, as we have discussed above, such a perspective is based on liberalism with a limited view of justice as human rights and democracy. It is partly right but it is not sufficient for promoting reconciliation. By contrast, reconciliation and restorative justice focus on relational aspects of conflict. Thus, I would argue that

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<sup>660</sup> Ibid. 55.

<sup>661</sup> Ibid. For the first four practices, see chapter 10, and for punishment and forgiveness, see chapter 11 and 12, respectively.

a sincere apology and forgiveness is necessary for promoting reconciliation.

At a personal level, an apology requires the perpetrator ‘to admit that he performed the deed, recognize that it was wrong, display regret for having done it, communicate this regret to the victim, accept responsibility for it, and pledge not to repeat it.’<sup>662</sup> At a political level, apologies are collective acts and have a collective impact. Philpott argues that ‘apologies are rare from those who commit political injustices and especially rare from high-level officials, but they do occur.’<sup>663</sup> He gives different examples. F. W. de Klerk, the last president of the apartheid government in South Africa, said “apartheid was wrong” and apologized for what the past government had done.

Germany has shown distinct examples of public apologies by national leaders regarding injustices committed by past governments. Philpott explains:

Chancellor Konard Adenauer’s statement of responsibility upon signing the Luxembourg Treaty of reparations of 1952 was the first major executive statement of responsibility and remorse, delivered at a time when Germany was largely still mired in amnesia. Chancellor Willy Brandt fell to his knee before a memorial to victims of the Nazis in Warsaw in 1970. Federal republic president Richard von Weizsäcker’s speech to the Bundestag in 1985, in which he was “specific and unflinching,” as Lazare puts it, in describing the crimes of the Third Reich, was the climax of this trend.<sup>664</sup>

German cases of public apology show the potential of apology in the political realm, particularly dealing with past wrongs. Philpott also offers a possibility of apology when leaders of state apologize for deeds others committed although they themselves are not responsible. He calls it “collective apology” and maintains the interrelation between collective apology and victims of political crimes. He argues that ‘the victim of the political crime is violated doubly, not only through harm to his person but also through the denial of his right to live under a government that establishes and enforces his human rights—a denial inflicted by an agent of the same government whose duty it is to uphold justice.’<sup>665</sup>

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<sup>662</sup> Ibid. 198.

<sup>663</sup> Ibid.

<sup>664</sup> Ibid. 199.

<sup>665</sup> Ibid. 202.

In the case of the Gwangju Uprising, the importance of apology is clearer. Chun Doo-hwan is responsible for his political crime as an individual and as a political leader. He is not only the person directly involved in the crime but also the national leader responsible for collective apology. Nevertheless, he has never apologized, either at an individualistic or collective level. Without his apology, how can the victims be free from their traumatic memory? Without his apology, how can healing and reconciliation be possible? Without his apology, how can they forgive him?

My answer is that it is possible. Individual apology is not necessary and it is impossible to force it. But collective apology is irreplaceable. Since the Gwangju Uprising was political violence committed by the government, an official leader of South Korea such as a president can and should apologize for the past wrongs. A public form of apology by the president would be powerful because it is a symbolic action that admits and apologizes for what the past government did. Philpott also highlights the potential of collective apology:

As for the individual dimension of injustices, only the perpetrator can apologize for them. This is a simple implication of moral agency. Because the person who chose to commit (or abet, or authorize) a wrong bears responsibility for his actions, only he can disavow this responsibility. If he does not, the responsibility remains with him. When the perpetrator dies so, too, does the possibility of apology, at least for the individual dimension of the injustice. Since the collective lives on, however, qualified authorities may apologize for the injustice committed even after the actual perpetrators have died. The two dimensions of injustice, then, yield two forms of apology, individual and collective. In principle, each may be performed separately. Only in the case when a leader of a collective apologizes for an injustice that he performed in the name of the collective do the two forms of apology converge in the same act.<sup>666</sup>

Each year, on 18<sup>th</sup> May, the national memorial ceremony has been observed since its designation in 1997. This year, President Moon Jae-in demonstrated a form of collective apology. As part of the ceremonial program, there was a testimony of a lady who lost her father during the Gwangju Uprising. Her father had lived outside of Gwangju for work and came to Gwangju during the days as she was born. Her father was killed since he was misunderstood to be one of the protesters. Her story and testimony were very emotional and touched the audience. When she was about to leave

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<sup>666</sup> Ibid. 203.

the stage, President Moon Jae-in spontaneously walked up to the stage and hugged her. The moment was broadcast live nationwide, and the next day, the photograph of President Moon Jae-in hugging the victim of the Gwangju Uprising was covered on the news media.<sup>667</sup> In my view, the image of the trial of the century [Fig. 9] is contrasted with the image of President Moon Jae-in's hug. As individual apology can be offset by collective apology made by someone other than the perpetrator, images like President Moon Jae-in's hug can be used for the victims' healing who traumatized by the Gwangju Uprising.

#### **6.4 Conclusion**

The photograph of the "Trial of the Century" can be interpreted in different ways. It can be seen as a symbol of justice ending the military dictatorship or it can be interpreted as the sign of the absence of justice, because there has been no apology to the victims. As we have seen through this thesis photographs are obviously polysemic. Nevertheless, these two different readings of the image can be related to different understandings of what justice is and what peace is. We have examined the concept of justice and debates between peace and justice. The arguments are divided by their priority between peace and justice. Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages. It depends on each context. In the Korean context, seeking justice was their priority.

Related to this, we have looked at *minjung* theology as an example of "justice first, peace later". Although *minjung* theology contributed to seeking justice in its context, it also had limits such as its dualistic approach to justice which could give rise to another form of conflict. Thus, I suggested reconciliation and restorative justice as a complementary approach to justice and peace. Since reconciliation and restorative justice focus on the relational aspect of justice, they can be complementary to a legalistic justice, human rights and democracy.

Reconciliation and restorative justice offers four insights to justice and peacebuilding: first, justice as relational focuses on people, particularly victims;

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<sup>667</sup> "President Moon, Hug of Tears, Comforting May 18," *Hankook Ilbo* 18 May 2017. (Accessed 26 June 2017).

second, restorative justice argues that justice is not punishment but restoration of a right relationship and assists the healing of victims; third, reconciliation can be useful guidelines for political justice; and lastly, we have looked at two forms of apologies, that is, individual and collective. Through the chapter, I have argued that reconciliation and restorative justice can offer moral imagination that overcomes the limits of the criminal justice system and promotes justice and peacebuilding which is people-centred and victims-oriented.

What is the role of photography for building peace and justice? I argued that the “Trial of the Century” [Fig. 9] was often regarded as the symbol of justice since the evil doers were punished. However, justice as punishment is partial, not complementary. To build peace and justice together, we need to focus on restoration of victims and reconciliation between offenders and victims. In this way, sincere apology and forgiveness are a key to justice as a means of peacebuilding. When looking at the photograph [Fig. 9], I argue that the audience can imagine not only what they see but also what they do not see—the moral imagination.<sup>668</sup> I imagine what if Chun Doo-hwan expressed his sincere apology to the victims and the victims are finally free from the traumatic past by forgiving him and the past.

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<sup>668</sup> John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (Oxford; NY: Oxford University Press, 2005).

## THESIS CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have presented and investigated different ways in which photography can be used for promoting peace in conflict situations. The questions I have explored included: What is the relationship between photography and peacebuilding? To what extent does photography promote peace rather than incite violence? What can be learned by investigating two different subjects, photography and peacebuilding? How does this research relate or contribute to the church in building peace? To examine these questions, I have investigated constructive uses of photography such as revealing truth, representing victims' pain, resisting violence, reconstructing painful history, and restoring justice and reconciliation. The primary case was the May 18 Democratic Uprising in Gwangju, South Korea between 18<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> May 1980. The following is a summary of my argument, which developed over six chapters.

### Summary of Chapters

In the first chapter, I presented a theoretical groundwork for the thesis, building a bridge between photography and peacebuilding. From a peacebuilding perspective, I reviewed the history of war photography from the 1850s to 1950s, focusing on two dominant approaches, *realism and surrealism*. In early war photography (1850s-1900), war photojournalists focused on how to portray war as realistically as possible. It was because they believed they could stop war if they provided realistic visualization of tragic realities of war such as injured soldiers, the dead, and ruined battlefields. Ernst Friedrich's *War against War* (1924) was considered as a radical example of realist war photography. Then, I criticized the realistic visualization of war as it was limited in the way in which it simply focused on the surface of war such as physical violence and battlefields.

The other approach emerged along with Breton's *Manifesto of Surrealism* in 1924. Surrealists criticized the overcredulity of human reason as the cause of massive killings and war. They rather insisted to develop human unconsciousness as an alternative ability to build a better world. They believed that they could stop war by emphasizing human unconsciousness so that surrealist photographers produced surreal



images, using techniques such as distortion and exaggeration. However, the surreal images that they produced were often too difficult for audiences to interpret what the images really mean. The use of photography in surrealism was too speculative and enigmatic, which made it inaccessible to the audience. Their intentions and messages behind the images could aim for peace; but the ways of visualizing their ideas on war appeared too abstruse for the audience.

Through reviewing these two approaches from the history of photography, I examined whether war photography could provide an appropriate distance between photography and the audience. I argued that the audience and their reception should be centered in discussing the role of photography for peacebuilding. In other words, the question we should ask about the role of photography for peacebuilding is whether photography provides a solid foundation from which to better understand war and conflict. In this way, as Lederach also suggests, we need a holistic perspective to look at conflict in multi-layered fashion and to understand the roots of conflict.

A holistic perspective can be applied to peacebuilding photography, by asking the question whether photography provides multi-layered visual information. As Lederach suggests, we need a lens to understand the complexity of conflict such as content, context, and social system. Moreover, I argued that we need a holistic approach to conflict because it helps us understand the roots of conflict, which is partly the breakdown of relationships. Drawing upon a social psychological approach to peacebuilding, I suggested that the key role of photography for peacebuilding is that it helps the audience focus on relationships between individuals and groups. The building and fracturing of relationships is a key recurring theme through all the chapters in the thesis. It is because, I contend, the use of photography for peacebuilding mainly draws upon people, photographers, participants, and the audience. It is also because, as I have argued, authentic change is possible from the restoration of relationships, especially the victims are included. Therefore, this thesis is grounded on the relational and victim-centered basis.

From the second chapter to the last chapter, I have explored the constructive uses of photography in violent conflict, focusing on an explosive and arguably catalytic moment in the shape of the May 18 Democratic Uprising. More particularly, I classified the historical meanings of the uprising through two aspects. On the one

hand, the event was a brutal massacre that killed or injured hundreds, probably thousands, of citizens by the forces sent by the military regime. On the other hand, it was one of the most significant democratic movements in Korean history.

For many people the Gwangju Uprising was a brutal massacre. The victims were ordinary citizens of Gwangju, but the armed forces indiscriminately killed people, regardless of age or sex. During the ten-day massacre, they lost everything from their life, family, and home. However, the government concealed the atrocities and manipulated the truth by strengthening their control of the media. In the process, the event was announced as a rebellion instigated by Communists. Hence, the victims of the atrocities suffered alone, isolated from the outside world. In this context, what was the role of photography for seeking justice and promoting peace?

With the respect, I selected two topics: truth and suffering. In Chapter 2, I have examined how photography can be used to reveal truth in conflict reporting. I focused on a photojournalist's role as bearing witness to the atrocity in proximity. I compared two concepts of media witness: *eye-witnessing* and *bearing witness*. While eye-witnessing simply means an act of seeing and is passive, bearing witness includes forms of action such as saying, engaging, advocating, and testifying.

My argument is that a photojournalist plays a critical role of bearing witness to truth for his or her *engaged* and *embedded* experience in the event. For example, Na Kyung-taek could capture the decisive moment of the atrocity since he had been there while confronting danger. As a journalist, his willingness to take significant risks to be present and to seek for truth, ultimately reinforced the truthfulness of his visual witness. As a local inhabitant of Gwangju, moreover, his photograph played a testimonial role in revealing the truth of the Gwangju massacre.

The role of a photojournalist as bearing witness to truth has significant implications for those pondering the role of the church in violent conflict. It should be remembered that the church is called to be a witness of Christ. It means that, as early Christians and martyrs did, the church should be willing to take a risk to follow him. As McClendon argues, such radical discipleship as willingness to follow Christ can be an ethos of bearing witness to violence and testifying truth in the conflict situation. In other words, churches and individual Christians, seeking to bear witness to the truth of a gospel, have much to learn from the practice of photographers seeking to bear

witness through their craft.

In Chapter 3, I discussed photographic representation of victims and its impact on the audience, focusing on suffering and empathy. I argued that photography can be used as a means of representing victims and their suffering. It provokes a feeling of empathy with the victims by dramatizing the moment of suffering. Critics such as Susan Sontag and Susan Moeller have concerns about photographic violence and its negative effects in the representation of victims' suffering. They insist that the audience may become gradually familiar with violent images by being exposed to the images repeatedly, and that this familiarity may produce compassion fatigue and moral numbness to the pain of others.

I argued, however, compassion fatigue theory is limited in its capacity to explain the complex interactions between photography and morality for the individual. It can over-simplify the understanding of the impact and reception of photography. In fact, in contrast to such concerns about the desensitizing nature of photography, numerous photographs have played a vital role of provoking empathy to those in suffering. One example is social documentary photography, earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Focusing on the image of the *Migrant Mother* by Dorothea Lange, I showed how Lange effectively represented the hardship of immigrant life in 1930s United States.

From this perspective, I showed how the image of *The Child with His Father's Portrait* [Fig. 4] delicately and deeply represents the pain of the little boy who lost his father, in comparison with the horrible images of the wounded in the photobook *O-Wol Gwangju*. While the unbearable images in the *O-Wol Gwangju* simply illustrate their physical suffering, the photograph [Fig. 4] invites the audiences into a deeper level of the suffering, a sense of grief and loss. Empathy is relational. Hence, to have empathy to the pain of others means to have a relationship with them by being with them and mourning with them.

The emphasis on a relational approach to suffering is also found in Christianity. In his volume *The Crucified God*, Moltmann contends that, for Christ, the experience of forsakenness is the most difficult suffering. He understands that the essence of Christ's suffering on the cross is not his physical suffering but his relational suffering as being abandoned by God. This offers at least two insights on empathy. First, the nature of suffering is relational. Second, God also suffers like us so that he has empathy

with us. God does not stand aloof from humanity by merely looking at their suffering; but rather he comes to us (incarnation) and suffers with us (the crucifixion). It echoes how the church should engage in the suffering and practice empathy with them.

While I highlighted how the Gwangju Uprising was represented as a brutal massacre in Chapter 2 and 3, from Chapter 4 to 5, I considered how the event was represented as one of the most significant democratic movements in Korean history. I highlighted the transition of violent conflict into meaningful history. The value of the Gwangju Uprising is that it did not end as a massacre but sowed the seeds for the June Uprising in 1987. As I noted earlier, the June Uprising emerged out of a complex historical context, but was undoubtedly linked with the Gwangju Uprising. As well as the Gwangju Uprising, the June Uprising contributed towards the end of dictatorship and the start of democratization; and as a result, the military regime finally ended. Because of this the Gwangju Uprising was re-interpreted and re-membered as a democratic movement. In this transition, I particularly focused on two themes: civil resistance and remembering. In short, I indicated how photography played a critical role in resisting violence, as well as reinterpreting and thereby reconstructing the painful history of violent conflict.

In Chapter 4, I investigated the role of photography as helping to empower people to overcome fear and to resist violence nonviolently. For the discussion, I reviewed civil resistance theories as applied to photography. I discussed Koh Myung-jin's photograph *Ah, My Fatherland!* [Fig. 7] which was captured during the June Uprising in 1987, in Busan, South Korea. The topless man in the image is a symbol of civil resistance that evokes the value of nonviolent actions.

It is argued that the idea of nonviolence is idealistic but not effective in reality. However, as I argued earlier, recent civil resistance studies have shown that civil resistance commonly works more effectively than violent struggles. As Johan Galtung argues, civil resistance as a medium for peace is the key of holistic transformation of conflict. Moreover, civil resistance is supported by theologians such as John Howard Yoder, Walter Wink, and Miroslav Volf. Yoder maintains that the way of Jesus was not to be passive in the face of violence, but to resist it nonviolently. Wink considers and critiques the myth of redemptive violence and argues the life of Jesus was based on his sacrificial love. Similarly, Volf emphasizes the cross of Christ as the symbol of

the break of the cycle of violence which can be seen as the best example of civil resistance.

I also noted that Koh Myung-jin's *Ah My Fatherland!* [Fig. 7] has a distinctive character. The photograph describes the protester as an active and nonviolent agent for the political struggle, while most other photographs focus on the violence of the repression or on the protesters as victims. The shirtless man in the photograph evokes a sense of pride and courage, empowering the audience to engage in the political struggle. There are obviously many differences between this photograph of a half-naked figure from the 20<sup>th</sup> century and earlier representations of the nearly naked crucified man from Nazareth from the 1<sup>st</sup> century. Nevertheless, there are some unexpected resonances to be discerned. For example, the courageous action of the man in the picture and Jesus' embracing of non-violence were later interpreted and celebrated as symbolic acts of civil resistance.<sup>669</sup>

In Chapter 5, I focused on the relationship between photography and memory. Memory is critical in the formation of social identity, which is deeply connected to conflict. Remembering is particularly significant when dealing with painful histories such as those related to the Gwangju Uprising. To build a bridge between memory and photography, I drew upon theories of cultural memory such as those advanced by Maurice Halbwachs and Aleida and Jan Assmann. According to their theories, memory is not fixed in the past, but lived in the present and constantly reconstructing our perception of the past. In the process, photography can be used as a powerful resource to reconstruct the painful past by choosing what to remember and how to commemorate.

I introduced my visit to the May 18 Memorial Foundation where I met Mr. Ahn who worked as a researcher at the organization. Through the conversation with him, I had realized that his memory of the Gwangju Uprising was different from mine. For him, the best symbolic image representing the identity of the Gwangju Uprising was the photograph of the Grand National Rally at the City Hall Plaza in Gwangju. It was a democratic and peaceful protest where about 20,000 people gathered and requested for the democratization of Korea. The photograph is not only representing the past but

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<sup>669</sup> Walter Wink, *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 85-86.

also reconstructing their new identity.

In relation to the reconstruction process, Dona Hicks suggests two ways of reconstructing the past: the first is the formation of a new identity and the other is healing and reconciliation with the past. The Gwangju Uprising applies to the first case. The brutal massacre has been more recently interpreted as a democratic movement. Although the Gwangju Uprising was reinterpreted, moving from viewing it as massacre to a democratic uprising, can we therefore infer that the painful memory was healed without forgiveness?

Particularly for the victims, the memory would be painful and unforgettable like a trauma. As Miroslav Volf argues, it is more important to ask how to remember wisely than whether to remember or not. As Hicks suggests, the second way of reconstructing the past is healing from traumatic memories. Then, how can the unforgettable memory be healed? To remember the painful memory rightly, Volf maintains it should be remembered from the victims' perspective. In the process, as both Hicks and Volf argue, forgiveness becomes the key to healing and reconciliation. My example with the photograph [Fig. 8] applies to the formation of a new identity that Hicks suggests, but does not apply to the latter, healing and reconciliation. The victims have not had a chance for forgiveness because the reconstruction process only occurred at legal and political levels, not at a personal level. Without forgiveness, can there be true healing of traumatic memory of the past? The question is considered further in my last chapter.

In Chapter 6, the final chapter of the thesis, I considered the meaning of justice in relation to peace. More specifically, I maintained that the current justice system appears to be largely grounded on the concept of retributive justice and focuses less on the victims' perspective. For building peace, I argued that healing and reconciliation is crucial. I suggested restorative justice and reconciliation as an alternative approach to the current criminal justice system. Because of the relational approach to justice, I argued that restorative justice and reconciliation can be a complementary model that satisfies both justice and peace.

I maintained that the case of the "Trial of the Century" in which the two former presidents were convicted at the court is a good example to examine the two concepts of retributive and restorative justice. I first outlined the debates on justice and peace,

namely whether peace is prior to justice or vice versa. I asserted that the “peace first, justice later” approach can be misused to maintain unjust systems. Then, drawing upon Sebastian Kim, I noted that the justice first, peace later” approach is more persuasive in the Korean context. As an example of Korean theology for the second model, I showed how *minjung theology* played a significant contributory role in ending the dictatorship and bringing about the new era of democracy. However, *minjung theology* and the justice first approach can be misused as another form of separatism such as “us” and “them”. With the exception of a few cases that the opponents are clearly evil, the distinction between who is right and wrong is not clear. Similarly, it is difficult to define who is the *minjung* and who can represent the *minjung* and by what criteria. More importantly, we need to ask whether *minjung theology* promotes healing and reconciliation. I contended that *minjung theology* and its emphasis on justice mainly draw upon the criminal justice system to such an extent that it often overlooks the victims in seeking justice.

Therefore, I suggested that restorative justice and reconciliation can be supplementary to the current criminal justice system. The retributive justice focuses on punishment of the offender by the legal authority, while it often overlooks the victims’ restoration. Whereas, restorative justice and reconciliation places an emphasis on the relationship between an offender and a victim. To rebuild the broken relationship, therefore, apology and forgiveness is necessary.

From the retributive justice perspective, the photograph of what was described by some as ‘the trial of the century’ [Fig. 9] can be seen as a symbol of the end of the dictatorship and that justice was finally sought. The two former presidents were punished by law. From the restorative justice perspective, however, it is neither the end nor the victory of democracy. Although they were punished by the law, they were released only two years later by a special pardon. Moreover, Chun Doo-hwan has never acknowledged what he did and never expressed his sincere apology to the victims. Without apology, how can the victims forgive him? Without forgiveness, how can they be free from the painful past? What the photograph indicates is the moment of legal punishment. But the punishment itself does not mean healing or reconciliation. Rather, we need a photograph of a sincere apology to the victims and the moment of forgiveness and reconciliation.

This is the reason we need “moral imagination” when we look at the photograph of the trial of the century (Lederach 2005). We should be able to look critically at the trial and maintain, “This is not enough”. We should be able to imagine that Chun Doo-hwan apologizes to the victims either in person or in public. In this respect, I briefly noted the importance of public apology by the political leaders regarding the painful history. Debates on public apology based on restorative justice and reconciliation can contribute to other conflict issues such as the comfort women issue between Korean and Japan. Restorative justice and reconciliation can be the theoretical basis for seeking justice better and promoting peace rightly. Broadly speaking, the relational and victim-centered approach has considerable potential for building peace and justice in the Korean context.

### **Contribution to Peacebuilding and the Church**

In the introduction of this thesis, I explained that I was going to draw upon peacebuilding, particularly using a conflict transformation approach, because it provides a more nuanced understanding of conflict. Describing peacebuilding as conflict transformation focuses on the fundamental aspect of conflict such as the breakdown of relationships between persons and groups. It views conflict as an opportunity of change by highlighting the relational aspect of conflict. It is based on a strong belief in the human capacity to bring about a change, breaking a cycle of conflict. Lederach (2005) calls the capacity as “moral imagination” which many now argue is needed to develop for peacebuilding.<sup>670</sup>

*Moral imagination* is ‘the capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist.’<sup>671</sup> More specifically, Lederach suggests four disciplines of *moral imagination*, the core art and soul of building peace: 1) the capacity to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that includes our enemies; 2) the ability to sustain a paradoxical curiosity that embraces complexity without reliance on dualistic polarity; 3) the

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<sup>670</sup> See Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*.

<sup>671</sup> Ibid. 29.



fundamental belief in and pursuit of the creative act; and 4) the acceptance of the inherent risk of stepping into the mystery of the unknown that lies beyond the far too familiar landscape of violence.<sup>672</sup>

In an image-oriented world, we see numerous images through social media, TV, film, newspapers, magazines, often now via the internet. It is ironic that even as we are overwhelmed by more and more images, with the creation of echo chambers many appear to be losing the ability to image the world of ‘other’. On a certain level, humanity has more information about the world because of the rapid development of digital media. Photography has provided more visual information of where we live or where we have not been. Then, why have we reached the conclusion that we are lack imagination?

The lack of imagination may mean the lack of experience. This deficiency is the most significant obstacle for transcending a cycle of violence. Photography cannot replace experience, it can partly help though, especially when engaged in ‘communities of interpretations’. In these days, the concept of having an experience is reduced to the act of seeing or watching. Sontag notes that people often confuse what they see on TV or the Internet with reality. They would be surprised and frightened for a while, but soon forget by turning their eyes onto another image. Susan Sontag describes such delusion as ‘the most irresistible form of mental pollution’:

Needing to have reality confirmed and experience enhanced by photographs is an aesthetic consumerism to which everyone is now addicted. Industrial societies turn their citizens into image-junkies. [...] It would not be wrong to speak of people having a compulsion to photograph: to turn experience itself into a way of seeing. Ultimately, having an experience becomes identical with taking a photograph of it, and participating in a public event comes more and more to be equivalent to looking at it in photographed form.<sup>673</sup>

*Moral imagination* is a counter action against the consumerism that entices citizens to become “image-junkies” away from being responsible participants.

Within the overflowing of the visual representations of conflict, what is the role

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<sup>672</sup> Ibid. 5.

<sup>673</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*. 24.

of the church? What kinds of theoretical and ethical possibilities are given to the church? Stanley Hauerwas claims that the act of looking is very much involved in Christian ethics (Hauerwas 1974; 1983). For Hauerwas, it is fundamental in Christian faith to discern what to look at and what not to look at in our society.<sup>674</sup> In both his books, *Vision and Virtue* and *The Peaceable Kingdom*, he defines Christian ethics as:

... the disciplined activity which analyses and imaginatively tests the images most appropriate to orchestrate the Christian life in accordance with the central conviction that the world has been redeemed by the work of Jesus Christ.<sup>675</sup>

From Hauerwas' perspective, how Christians are to look at the world is radically ethical and transformative. Jolyon Mitchell develops how Christians look into further how they perceive media violence. In spite of the importance of vision for Christians, Mitchell argues that only a few Christian scholars and ethicists have considered the related practice of looking and analyzing such images. He maintains:

Visual representations can be used to form character, to develop virtues and to shape practice, and therefore merit careful attention. Both specific media and media organizations, sometimes described as image-making industries, are regularly overlooked in discussions of Christian ethics.<sup>676</sup>

In this thesis I have argued that photography can contribute to building peace in different ways. I took a particularly close look at the constructive uses of photography in conflict situations. By doing so, I wanted to provide a particular perspective for the church to look, to see, and to interpret photographic representations of conflicts. The themes I have covered are fundamental in forming Christian virtues such as bearing witness to truth, empathy with the suffering, nonviolence, remembering and healing, and forgiveness and reconciliation. My theological arguments can be used not only to form Christian ethics for peacebuilding but also to provide public language for the wider discussion in the peacebuilding field.

I also hope that the thesis contributes to providing a peacebuilding perspective

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<sup>674</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue; Essays in Christian Ethical Reflection* (Notre Dame, IN: Fides Publishers, 1974). 37-38.

<sup>675</sup> *The Peaceable Kingdom : A Primer in Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983). 69.

<sup>676</sup> Mitchell, *Media Violence and Christian Ethics*. 11.

for the church as an interpretive community. Photographic representations require interpretation. It is because all visual representations are social products in a context. It is perhaps difficult that a viewer alone interprets the meaning of photographic representations and engages with photographs in a historical context. As such, I suggest that the church can be “communities of interpretation” that provide a space for reading and interpreting photographs theologically and ethically. If the church becomes a space for looking at images differently and looking at images other than stereotypical images, the church can contribute to building peace through photography in our society.

### **Possible Areas for Future Research**

I have investigated the different roles of photography for building peace in the context of the Gwangju Uprising. In this thesis, I have focused upon a variety of themes in relation to peacebuilding such as revealing truth, representing pain of victims, resisting violence, remembering painful history, and restoring justice and reconciliation. Now I want to expand my research area from photography taken during the period (1980s) into other visual arts produced after the event (1990s-present).

My research interest is in social interactions between media arts and violent conflict, focusing on the broad question “what is the role of media arts for building peace in a (post)conflict situation?” My interest in media arts and peacebuilding is related to my own academic background. I studied theology, peacebuilding, and conflict transformation during my Masters at both Boston University and Emory University. Through these studies I learnt more about how peacebuilding and conflict transformation has a strong emphasis on the social and psychological aspects of a protracted conflict. To break the cycle of violence, scholars such as John Paul Lederach, argue that we need to understand roots of conflict (Lederach 2003; 2004). This is the reason I came to focus on the role of media arts. Studying arts and media provides a better understanding of a cultural phenomenon, particularly a violent conflict like the Gwangju Uprising.

The May 18 Gwangju Democratic Uprising is one of the most painful moments in the history of modern Korea. This event took place in Gwangju, South

Korea, between 18<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> May 1980.<sup>677</sup> Much of the early literature on the Gwangju Uprising generally focused on historical research, and attempted to uncover who was responsible for the tragedy and how to compensate victims (Lee Jai-eui 1999, Shin & Hwang 2003, Kim Young-taek 2005, and Lee Nam-hee 2007). More recently, new approaches have interpreted the event from a social science perspective, focusing upon an “absolute community” (Choi Jung-woon 2006, and Suh You-kyung 2014), gender (Kang Hyun-Ah 2003, and Shin Ji-yeon 2007), memorial politics (Kim Hong-gil 2007), and trauma and commemoration (Jung Ho-gi 2003; 2010, and Kim Hang 2011).

In relation to arts and literature, there are a considerable number of works including poems and novels (Jang Il-gu 2003, Kim Jeong-sook 2007, Shin Ji-yeon 2007, Shim Young-eui 2008, Jang Eun-young 2011, and Kim Hwa-seon 2013). There are a few studies on the usage of arts during the event such as prints, pamphlets and street drama (Oh Eun-ha 2011), *minjung* arts (Sebastian Kim 2015); but there are, to the best of my knowledge, few studies on the interactions between the uprising and contemporary arts. I hope that this project contributes to enriching the discussion of meanings and applications of the Gwangju Uprising.

Through my work in the thesis, I came to be more interested in the relationship between collective memory and social identity. Media arts are not simply a source of collective memory, but they are constantly functioning in the process of construction of a social identity. At least in the media context, we do not actually *remember* the past but *imagine* the past based on what we saw on the media outlet. My question is that if the act of remembering is related to what we see, the opposite way of approach is also possible. That is, media arts can help remembering painful history wisely because it depends on what we choose to remember. Therefore, there is clearly a need to reflect further on how contemporary arts *re-constructs* the collective memory of the Gwangju Uprising. For this, three potential research subjects are worth highlighting: *minjung* arts, films, and contemporary photography.

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<sup>677</sup> The importance of the event is not only because it was a political massacre that resulted in lots of victims (154 killed, 74 missing, and 4,141 wounded, including those who died subsequently), but also because it was an example of Korean democratic uprising fighting against the suppression of the military regime.

My first group of research is “*minjung* arts” as a medium of resistance against dictatorship and an expression of the oppressed requesting Korean democracy. The social impact and reception of *minjung* arts among contemporary audiences has changed as time passes by. For example, there are two giant murals portraying the scene of the uprising at Chonnam National University. The murals were produced in the 1990s by university students which had represented a symbol of the uprising. In 2008, as one of the murals was wiped out by the university, the mural issue came to the surface whether it should be kept or not. It would be valuable to explore *minjung* arts, including the murals, and its contemporary reception because it provides a space to discuss public discourse regarding the painful past. Particularly, I am personally particularly interested in Hong Sung-dam, a Korean painter and one of the most influential *minjung* artists.<sup>678</sup>

A second area of future research is contemporary media arts: films and photographs. Films are one of the most popular media in Korean society. Since 1990, a series of films related to the Gwangju Uprising have been produced and released: *A Petal* (Jang Sun-woo 1996), *Peppermint Candy* (Lee Chang-dong 2000), *May 18* (Kim Ji-hoon 2007), *26 Years* (Cho Geun-hyun 2012), and *A Taxi Driver* (Jang Hoon 2017). These films impacted to Korean society because, unlike *minjung* arts, they were easily accepted by its audiences. It would be valuable to investigate how the films represented the victims and their trauma, by analyzing both their strengths and limitations.

A third area worthy of further possible research relates to contemporary artists and photographers who produce images related to the Gwangju Uprising. In the early period (1980s-1990s), the primary use of photography was to reveal the atrocities of the military regime. In my thesis, my methodology mainly draws upon content analysis using archive photographs as historical document. Whereas, contemporary photographers tend to reproduce and display images in ways that highlight more of their own interpretations. For this, I will investigate several art exhibitions such as *A Photobook of the May* (2008) and *Hoola Song of the Day* (2013).

Finally, It is my hope that this research contributes to enriching the discussion of peacebuilding through media arts in the Korean context. Particularly the value of

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<sup>678</sup> Bae Jae-han. "A Case of Creative Activity as a Human Right: Korean Activist Artist Sung-dam Hong." *Art Education* 70, no. 4 (2017): 12-16.

truth, forgiveness, and reconciliation are essential to build a better society in the Korean context. Besides the Gwangju Uprising, there are conflict issues such as the Jeju 4.3 Uprising (1948), the NoGeunRi Massacre (1950), the June Uprising (1987), the sexual slavery victims of the Japanese Imperial Army during WWII, and Inter-Korean Relations. I believe that studying the history of conflict in the Korean context can be useful to develop common values and practices for building peace in wider contexts in Asia and the wider World.



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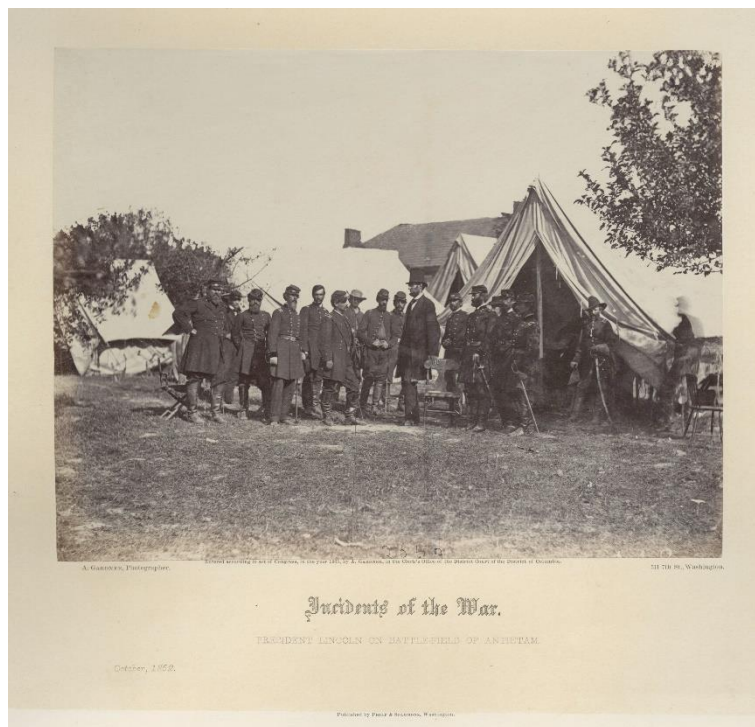
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## APPENDIX



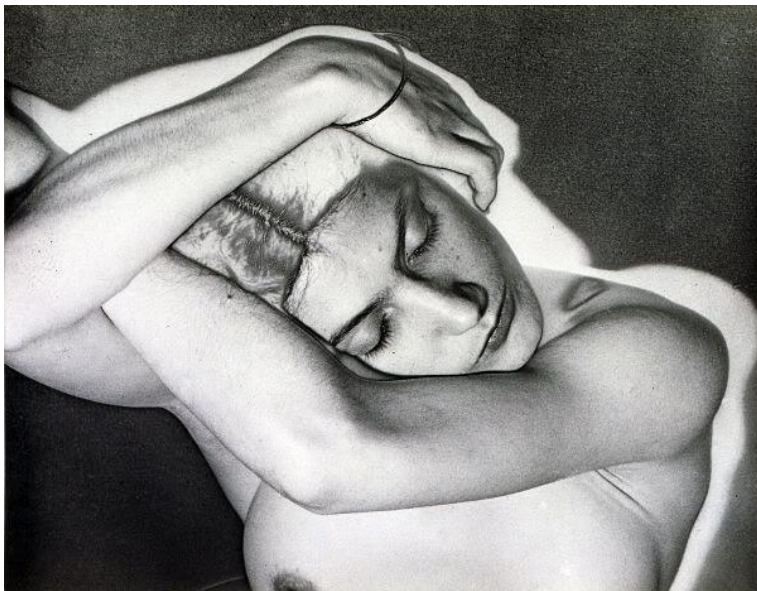
Appendix 1. Roger Fenton, *The Valley of the Shadow of Death*, 1855



Appendix 2. Alexander Gardner, *President Lincoln on Battle-Field of Antietam*, 1862



Appendix 3. A Seriously Injured Soldier,  
“The Face of War” in *War Against War* (Ernst Fredrich, 1924)



Appendix 4. Man Ray, *Natacha allongée*, 1931 circa





Appendix 5. Dora Maar, *Père Ubu*, 1936



Appendix 6. Hans Bellmer, *La Poupée*, Berlin, 1935





Appendix 7. André Kertész, *The Fork*, 1928



Appendix 8. Diane Arbus, *Untitled #1*, 1970